

AMERICA

A CATHOLIC REVIEW OF THE WEEK

DECEMBER 26, 1936

WHO'S WHO

GERARD DONNELLY joined the nationally-gathered Staff of AMERICA in 1931, as representative of the St. Louis area. Previously, he was associated with Father Lord on the *Queen's Work*. He traveled the country in organization effort for the Sodalities. Yet earlier in his career, he held the teacher's rostrum in Mid-West colleges. Still earlier, he opened his eyes first in St. Louis. . . . ALEXANDER BEDENKOFF will be remembered as the author of *Atheist, Anarchist, but He Kneelt to Pray* (November 14), a true little tale of Prince Kropotkin. He has proof for the truth-in-fact of his current incident. He is a feature writer for the Russian daily newspaper, *Novoye Russkoye Slovo*. . . . JOHN WILTYBE has an identity, but he is loath to disclose the date of his birth, the offices he has held, the honorary degrees that he has endured, the periodicals that have suffered him. . . . GABRIEL A. ZEMA, S.J., as a young man conducted Italian clubs; as a priest has preached to and shepherded Italians. He knows his people.

NEXT WEEK, being the turning week into a new year, will give reason for a survey of 1936. JOHN LAFARGE will discuss *Religion and Liberty* as they have twinned or been divorced during the twelvemonth. PHILIP H. BURKETT will mark the *Social Progress* of the year. FRANCIS M. CROWLEY will make record of the educational developments. FATHER FEENEY will report his personal preferences among the books of the year.

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COMMENT

CHESTERTON'S loss will be felt most as each succeeding Christmas recurs. No real great Christian has missed the significance of the infancy of Our Lord and His birth in the Christian plan. Chesterton certainly has not. He assumes three elements in the Catholic idea as essential and sees all three crystalized in the Christmas story. The first element is the human instinct for a heaven that shall be as literal and almost as local as a home. Its need is recognized to a degree by all the mythologies and pagan poems, just as it is entirely absent in the philosophers from Lucretius to Herbert Spencer. The second element is a philosophy larger, more many-sided, inclusive and receptive than all the philosophies. "It looks at the world through a hundred windows where the ancient stoic or modern agnostic only looks through one. It sees life with thousands of eyes belonging to thousands of different sorts of people, where the philosophy is only the individual standpoint of a stoic or an agnostic." The third element of the Catholic idea is that while it is local enough for poetry and still larger than any other philosophy, it is still stiffly embattled against every front of error. "It gets every kind of man to fight, it gets every kind of weapon to fight with, it widens its knowledge of the things that are fought, for and against, with every art of curiosity or sympathy; but it never forgets that it is fighting. It proclaims peace on earth and never forgets why there was war in heaven."

THE fanaticism that arises out of beliefless Christianity takes strange forms. We thought it had about reached the limit a few years ago when there was founded in England "The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Vegetables." But this Christmas we have something even newer, which might be called "The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Cardboard." The members of the Latter Day Saints Church of Salt Lake City are sending leaflets abroad protesting against the purchasing of war-like toys for children at Christmas time. They say: "How inconsistent it is on the holiday honoring the birth of Christ to put into the hearts of children, by means of their toys, the very opposite of the message that heralded his birth—Peace on Earth." In point of theological unsoundness, repellent unctuousness, and unsound psychology, it would be hard to beat that sentence. Christ, the Prohibitionist, was tried out by various religious organizations a few years ago, and failed. Now we must have Christ, the Pacifist; as though the "peace" spoken of in Holy Scripture has not been shared by Christ with millions of brave soldiers dying on the battle-field for love of God or country. This is bad enough. But now to bring the causes of war down to the playing with cardboard soldiers

and little toy guns by children in the nursery—this is the limit. Where do these people learn about children anyhow? Do they know any children? As Chesterton says in his autobiography, anyone who cannot see the difference between "doing" and "playing at" a thing, the difference between playing at robbers and real stealing, has no concept of the world of the child, nor of the charming and harmless fairyland he builds up in his realm of make-believe. Can anyone sanely imagine that the hatred which breeds war is the result of letting children play with toy muskets and paper regiments around the Christmas tree? "The little toy soldier is red with rust and his musket moulds in his hand," sang Eugene Field when Little Boy Blue died. We were under the impression, and so was Eugene Field, that "while he was sleeping an angel song awakened our Little Boy Blue." We can now learn from the Latter Day Saints that we were mistaken. The child undoubtedly died with murder in his heart, and it is a great blessing that he did not grow up and make the world unsafe for democracy.

ELECTORS, 531 of them, convened in the various State capitals last week to exercise their Constitutional function of voting for "two persons" and of making a "list of all the persons voted for" to send to Mr. Garner. They all seem to have enjoyed the pleasant time traditionally associated with the ceremony. They also willingly collected their fees. In New York State the forty-seven electors each received fifteen dollars for his work, which, some \$705 in all, they donated to the Warm Springs Foundation. It is reported, though, that some of these care-free Albany visitors, as they sat at their happy luncheon table, saw a mystic finger writing strange words upon (of all places!) the walls of the De Witt Clinton. These words, being interpreted, warned them of bad news from Nebraska, where Senator Norris, that sturdy champion of Much Needed Change, insisted that he was going to press the amendment which he offered last session and which is still pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee. This measure would abolish the electoral college and its meetings, though not the present vote-by-State system, and thus permit citizens to ballot directly for the man of their choice instead of for a lot of official dummies. Representative Lea, of California, as a refinement, wants to split up the 531 votes in proportion to the popular vote of each State. If Senator Norris really pulls up his socks and shoves heartily, he will probably get his proposal adopted. It is due to his "Lame Duck Amendment," ratified just four years ago, that the President will be inaugurated next month instead of waiting until March.

SPEAKING on December 10 before the New York branch of the National Federation of Catholic Alumni, the Rev. Edmund A. Walsh, S.J., of Georgetown University, expressed pronounced dissent with the notion that Communism's peril in this country has passed with the meager results shown by the Communist party in the recent election. He believed that certain Catholic utterances that have recently been made to that effect were entirely misleading, and he pointed out that the extremely small number of enrolled party members, relative to the many millions of the major parties, is no reflection on the vitality of the movement. As mere voting units, 51,000 persons are, of course, but a trifle in a national contest; but 51,000 trained, professed, and fanatical agitators are a powerful bulwark for so well-disciplined a cause. Moreover, said Father Walsh, "it is not on the 51,000 registered American Communists that Communism counts. Its leaders rely on the 2,000,000 friends in affiliated organizations, on the sympathetic idealist whose intelligence is not always equal to his emotional impulses, on the growing number of school teachers, professors, writers, and subtle propagandists who are trained to play ceaselessly on the social resentments of the masses until legitimate economic complaints are transformed into class hatred." Behind the Communist party stands a powerful foreign Government dedicated to the destruction of Christianity and human liberty. Under the auspices of that Government in Moscow, on February 9, 1937, there is scheduled to convene a "World Convention of the Godless," for the purpose of co-ordinating the attack on Christianity: a new International of Atheism is to be launched. The gravest disservice to the truth is offered by those who would minimize the peril of Bolshevism.

BROUGHT home to us by repeated instances of individual churchmen is the attitude of a mere Gospel Christianity that rejects an authoritative teaching and ruling Church. The subservience of a State Church as well as the hesitancy and shilly-shallying of its spokesmen in face of some showdown on faith and morals are a matter of history. The English House of Lords recently rejected the misnamed Euthanasia Bill, which, as Lord Fitzalan said, should have been entitled a Bill to legalize murder and suicide. Reformers, especially English, like fancy names. The same Catholic peer said in the debate that the Ponsonby Bill asked them to ignore the Almighty, an impertinence which, he hoped, the noble lords would do well to spurn. This was, of course, getting to the roots of the question, as any instructed Catholic child knows. The head of the Anglican Church brought puzzling, mystifying enlightenment to the debate. He admitted he found the question a difficult one in which principle contended with compassion; it must be approached, he said, on the basis of the clear moral principle that no man was entitled, voluntarily, to take his own life. In the Archbishop's opinion, the matter was one that should be left to the medical profession whose honor and judgment he trusted; and so,

while favoring rejection left it thus hanging in the air, up to the physicians whose traditional duty is to conserve life. Lord Hodder instantly rejoined that his, the medical profession should wash their hands of the whole mess and regretted the identification of any physicians with it. For his liberal opinion, His Grace of Canterbury heard the author of the Bill angrily retort on the defeat of the Bill that it was not the first time the priesthood and the medicine men had worked together. This is not the end of "Mercy Murders"; we hope the next debate will find the Archbishop more definitely inspired.

AS is inevitable in any Southern discussion on social matters, the bi-racial situation was canvassed at the Institute on Southern Regional Development and the Social Sciences held at Chapel Hill, N. C., June 17-27 of this year. To this gathering, directed by Prof. Howard W. Odum, eminent sociologist of the University of North Carolina, came professors and heads of departments from Florida, Texas, Louisiana, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Alabama, Virginia, and other parts of the South. Much attention was given to the development of agricultural life and its relation to popular and higher education. But effort for social planning, they discovered, was complicated by the bi-racial problem. "One of the most obvious reasons for the social and economic retardation of the South," said the summary of their findings, "is the unwillingness of the white man to face the fact that his own fate and the fate of the region as a whole are inseparable from the fate of the Negro." As a remedy for such a misconception they proposed that Southern educational and social work should strive more and more to act "from the point of view of the welfare of the whole region rather than from the point of view of the interests of one race as opposed to those of the other." Specific recommendations of cooperation and intellectual interchange were made. After all, this is but a scientific reaffirmation of a principle uttered twenty-two years previously by Booker T. Washington, when he declared: "We are bound together by ties we could not tear asunder if we would." And ten years before that: "It is a sign of highest civilization when individuals reach the point where their strength is used in pulling every human soul up to the very highest point of usefulness and service."

WE hope our voice is not doomed to Cassandra's fate when we keep sounding the alarming warning of the spread of Communism among the young people of our country. But most American citizens have no concept of the extent of progress this most insidious disease is making. The attack is being advanced through the public high-school which we are accustomed to laud as the great institution for the spread of Americanism. Most of us associate Americanism and Democracy as synonymous terms, but unless we are watchful of what is disseminated through the medium of the school, there is danger of Democracy changing its meaning.

LET US GLORIFY HIM WITH PSALMS

Reasons and a plan are added to exhortation

GERARD DONNELLY, S.J.



THE profound ignorance enjoyed by your average Catholic on all matters pertaining to the Breviary is something that goes back for its causes to the ancient incident at Babel.

To be sure, more modern causes are frequently suggested. One can, for instance, make out a pretty plausible case for blaming it all on the clergy. In some forty-odd years of church-going up and down the land your correspondent has never yet heard a sermon on the Divine Office—or met any other Catholic who did. And it does seem curious that our preachers, despite their zeal and ample minimum of fifty-two chances per year, seem to have nothing whatever to say about a prayer book which the Church ranks in importance alongside the Mass and the Sacraments.

This queer pulpit taboo, moreover, persists even during retreats. Surely one might expect that then, when the necessity of prayer forms a leading topic of discussion, something favorable might be mentioned about the Church's ancient and approved manner of praying. Yet neither here nor in the flood of ascetical books by clerical writers is the Breviary given so much as a polite bow.

Even more astonishing in this matter, though, is the layman's complete lack of curiosity. He is continually bumping his shins, so to speak, over some one or other evidences of the Office—when he is invited to Vespers, when he attends Tenebrae, when he goes to funerals or visits cloistered convents. Frequently he sees the little black book in the hands of his pastor, and in a dozen other ways the Church's love and use of the Breviary are thrust upon him. You would think that once in a while at least the layman would be impelled to ask: "Just what is this mysterious thing they call the Office, anyway, and why is it never talked about from the pulpit"?

Babel, of course, is really the reason. It is the old language difficulty. No doubt the laity's indifference to the Office springs from the fact that it is never explained to them. But who will blame the preacher who shrinks from lecturing on a four-volume book written wholly in Latin? And how can he hope to expound the content, structure, use, and beauties of a book which not one of his hearers has even been interested enough to examine?

Nor is it any real answer to point to the popularization of the Mass. True enough, the Mass has been the theme for thousands of sermons during recent years, and these have borne fruit in a new popular interest and participation in the Sacrifice. But the point is that neither these sermons nor their gratifying results would have been possible had not the Missal been previously translated into English.

Meanwhile the Breviary was left untranslated. As a consequence there are a lot of rather deplorable misapprehensions about it in the mind of the average Catholic.

He is convinced, for one thing, that the Breviary is a prayer book for priests only. Or, maybe, it is something to be chanted by monks in choir. At any rate, he, a simple fellow in the church pew, has no part in it whatever—except perhaps to take off his hat at funerals or cornerstone layings and the like whenever he hears the clergy begin the Gregorian.

This, of course, is a prodigious blunder—this idea that the layman is excluded from the Office. But because of it the word *prayer* has come to mean to the ordinary Catholic only *devotions*—such things as rosaries, bedside orisons, Stations, or novenas. Urge your man to pray more and he will respond by increasing the number of his Eucharistic visits, his aspirations, his readings out of the *Key of Heaven* and other manuals of piety. But any suggestion that he might also recite the Breviary or that as a member of the Mystical Body he would do well to share in the Church's corporate prayer is sure to startle him and even arouse him to resentment.

True, he knows by this time that of a Sunday he is expected to follow the Mass prayers in his missal. But say the Office prayers, too? That sounds extreme, and he is certain to have a ready answer. It usually comes in five parts: he never heard of such a practice; he doesn't know Latin; he hasn't the time; he's not interested anyway; and besides he prefers to leave the Breviary to the clergy where it belongs—along with their vestments and incense.

There is, however, a second class of Catholics, more spiritually alive and responsive. These have been more or less affected by the liturgical move-

ment. They may not know even yet that ever since that movement got under way it has marched straight toward the goal of popular use of the Breviary. But they do suspect that there is a kind of prayer within the Church bigger, nobler, and more perfect than the devotions to which they have long been accustomed.

Well, the opportunity has come at last to satisfy them—as well as to convert their less pious brothers. An American firm is publishing the entire Breviary in English (*The Roman Breviary: An English Version*. By the Stanbrook Nuns. Benziger Brothers. 4 Vols.). The books have readable type, a good translation, and not a word of Latin.

With the old barrier of language thus happily removed, our clergy will no doubt begin the hitherto impossible task of teaching their people the importance of the Office, the function it plays in official worship, and the benefits of individual usage. We are assured that in those European countries where the Breviary was recently turned into the vernacular, sermons and writings on the subject have grown in number and popularity. Not only that but unexpectedly large groups of the laity have bought the book and are using it with profit. Old misunderstandings have been wiped away, an ancient heritage has been restored, and the people are eagerly welcoming their new chance to take an active part in the great communal prayer.

There is no reason why a similar result, or even a better, cannot be sought among American Catholics. This objective—a daily recitation of the Office in English (of the whole Office by some, of parts of it by others)—will require time, of course, and effort. But a start has already been made in the League of the Divine Office initiated last year by the Benedictines, who are pioneers in this and other projects concerned with popularizing the Liturgy.

However, if the laity are to be won over they must be offered reasons as well as exhortations. Several reasons are here set down in numbered order. The reader should not flinch because at first blush they seem to disparage private devotion. Often enough, to preach the Office one must compare it with private prayer. Such comparisons, however, if in harmony with the mind of the Church, do not minimize private devotions, but only magnify the Office.

1. The Divine Office is the prayer of the Mystical Body. As a member of the Body, each Catholic ought to take a vocal part in its prayer. When he does this, he prays, not *solo*, with a puny and lonely voice, but in the Church's great chorus, united with all the faithful, the clergy, the hierarchy, the Pope as well as with the suffering and triumphant Church, and its Divine Head in heaven. Hence the efficaciousness of such prayer.

2. The Office is chiefly a prayer of praise. It aims at giving glory to God more than getting favors for oneself. It is theocentric, not egocentric. Its theme is "We adore"—a nobler theme than "Please give."

3. Thus it breaks away from selfish and rugged individualism in worship—the I-Me-My type of prayer. It will not permit a man to isolate himself or shut himself up in a water-tight compartment

and make prayer an affair between God and himself alone. Like the Mass it is essentially social and corporate worship, phrased in the plural number.

4. Nearly all prayer-book prayers are written by some pious clergyman. Admirable as they are, they exemplify his personal idea of prayer—of what one ought to say to God and of how to say it. But the Psalms, the backbone of the Breviary, have God Himself as their chief author. They represent God's idea of prayer. If we reverence and use the *Pater* because Christ gave us its very wording, we ought likewise use the Psalms inspired by the Holy Spirit.

5. The Office is intimately joined to the day's Mass. The Missal and Breviary are twin books. The latter enshrines the day's Sacrifice, echoes its prayers, extends and continues the Mass.

6. The Breviary contains morning and evening prayers. It makes acts of faith, love, contrition, and all the rest. It thanks, offers reparation, makes petition for needs. It honors Mary and all the Saints. It includes all intentions, praying for the dead, for the missions, for sinners, benefactors, friends. It is all manuals of piety rolled into one—and more efficacious than them all.

There are, to be sure, many other reasons for popular use of the Breviary, and all of them persuade to the *daily* recitation of the *whole* Office. However, the layman had better pause for some time before he attempts such totalitarianism. For one thing there is a technique to be learned, more complicated than marking the missal and even requiring an instructor. For another, the sheer length and number of prayers, together with the time involved, may discourage him and persuade him to drop the whole idea.

It will be wiser, therefore, to adopt a graduated or cumulative program, one which will carry him by easy stages not only to skill in the technique of the Breviary, but also to a love for its beauties.

As a practical plan the following schedule is suggested:

A. During one month the daily recitation of Compline, the Breviary's evening prayer. Time: 7 minutes. Book: *Into Thy Hands*. The Liturgical Press: Collegeville, Minn. Price 15 cents

B. During the second month, in addition to Compline, the daily recitation of Prime, the Church's morning prayer. Total time for A and B: 15 minutes. Book: *The Hour of Prime*, Liturgical Press. Price 15 cents

C. In third to sixth month, the daily reciting (at various periods in the day) of Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones, Vespers, and Compline. Total time required: 30 minutes. Book: *The Roman Breviary*. Benziger.

D. Thereafter, add Matins and Lauds. Time for the whole Office: about 1 hour. Book: *The Roman Breviary*.

It is not to be expected, of course, that *all* laymen will ever adopt this *whole* program. But just now we are close to the opposite extreme—in which *no* layman reads *any* part of the Breviary. Is it too idealistic to ask a compromise?

This is the season when *Venite adoremus* is familiar to all the Faithful. It would seem to be a particularly appropriate time for telling them of the Church's other and even more insistent invitation, *In psalmis jubilemus Deo*.

ITALIAN AMERICANS FEDERATE AS CATHOLICS

A new solution to the problem of loss to the Church

GABRIEL A. ZEMA, S.J.

TWO things make for enduring health in any society of men: vital force and organization of elements. These qualities of vitality and organization characterize the Italian Catholic Federation (ICF) whose birthplace is the far West. Light comes from the Golden Gate. What is the ICF and what are its purpose and method? If it stay faithful to its principles and discipline with the backing and encouragement of ecclesiastical authorities we may without claim to prophetic vision say that its influence and work will be a very practical solution to what we have known to be the Italian Catholic problem in the United States.

The ICF was founded in 1924 by Signor Luigi Providenza who had been identified with Catholic Action in Genoa and was forced to leave the country during the communistic trouble there. "I know the gentleman well," writes an enlightened and zealous member of the American Hierarchy, "and consider him an outstanding, active, humble, intelligent Catholic." Mr. Providenza, forty years old, is tall and fair (a type that Americans naturally do not usually associate with Italians but which is actually sometimes met with even in southern Italy). He possesses a power of leadership that is strong and attractive and as a public speaker combines simplicity and persuasiveness with distinctive effect. But it is to his indefatigable zeal, to the force of his sincerity and his personal example that the Federation owes, after God, the largest part of its success.

Religious growth, patriotic inspiration, social progress and fraternal well-being are the four aims; and like four well directed and clear flowing streams that meet in a great reservoir they answer beautifully to vibrant vitality and perfect organization in the ICF. This society seeks first of all to save the Faith among the Italians of California, to increase it and make them proud of it, and naturally to foster an intelligent and fervent love of the pastor and parish. "This organization," says the opening paragraph of the statutes and by-laws "has been established for practical Catholics who are Italian by birth or origin . . . it is composed of various branches each having its male and female section. . . . In parishes which are predominantly Italian persons of other

nationalities may be admitted as members provided that their number does not exceed ten per cent of the Italian members and provided that such admission be considered advisable by the local pastor." It seeks a large and extensive membership but it restricts admission in order to establish and preserve the Catholic spirit and to foster thorough and intensive work. There is an apostolic and missionary ring to the religious aim: "to uphold and develop the religious spirit among its members and to spread that spirit among the Italian people outside of the organization." The religious ends are worked out through missions, tridua, conferences, retreats, talks by the chaplain during the meetings and by striving to have a sermon in Italian at one of the Sunday Masses at least one a month. Frequent Communion is also strongly urged, as is attendance at Catholic schools.

Universal in its appeal, it confines, however, its efforts to the Italian-American population. There are at present fifty-seven branches and six more are in process of formation. Thirty-two are in the archdiocese of San Francisco, six in Los Angeles, one in Sacramento and the rest in the Monterey-Fresno diocese. The six new branches are being formed in the diocese of Los Angeles. The branches are founded wherever possible in conjunction with parishes where there are fifty or more families.

The ICF fosters true patriotism. Occasional conferences are given on this important subject at the meeting by competent speakers. While it induces Italians to be proud of the culture of the country of their origin both in the brilliant Catholic past and in the best aims of the present Government, it stirs in them a genuine patriotism and love of the country of their adoption. Good citizenship and service and love of the native and adopted country are everywhere recognized qualities of the vast majority of Italian-Americans who have made the United States their home. Patriotism cannot be measured by the few who violate our laws and disgrace the Italian name; no more than we would want to advertise Americans in Europe by the type of citizenship represented by the Reds, the K.K.K. or the Black Legion. The Italian Catholic Federation tries nevertheless to preserve and increase all that is understood by Italian Catholic

culture and to work along lines most satisfactory to the people themselves.

With unfailing outlook this new organization aims to promote marriages which are looked upon with favor by the Church. To aid in this it provides entertainment and innocent amusement for its members. The various branches aim to foster and safeguard a healthy social atmosphere. The idea is to have mothers, fathers and the older children as members. Hence all practical Catholics over sixteen years of age are admitted. By having the mothers and fathers present there seems to be a guarantee that all entertainment will be enjoyed without damage to souls. Italians, like all human beings, are apt to follow the tide of irreligion and domestic dishonor when they find themselves in an atmosphere of disrespect for the nobility and sacredness of the marriage bond.

The fraternal aid idea is the fourth aim of the

Italian Catholic Federation. Membership in the Federation is encouraged by the offer of a small health insurance. The insistence upon the financial obligations of the members secures medical care in time of need and serves also as a healthy, disciplinary measure for solid and loyal membership.

There is a great need of organization among all Catholics everywhere. With regard to Italians there are three specific reasons for organization. Well ordered unification for a noble end is like setting a strong city upon a hill and protecting the citadel by strong walls. Secondly, Italians are numerous and their families are large. The future of the Church is with the large family. Thirdly, the Latin people including the Italians have been neglected in this country. We have to face the situation and work even overtime to save hundreds of thousands of souls. They seek bread and we should not give them a stone.

LENIN WEPT ONE CHRISTMAS EVE

Bethlehem's Babe finds no welcome in Sovietland

ALEXANDER BEDENKOFF

CHRISTMAS Eve, 1904. Over the entire world, Christian people of all creeds celebrated the eve of the Day of Days in memory of the birth of Christ. But in a big house owned by a Russian engineer, Leonid Krassin, in the small village of Kuokkala, at the very boundary between Russia and Finland, was weird silence. Plunged into darkness, window-shutters tightly closed, it seemed that the house had been abandoned. But not so. Within the house was life. In one big room, filled with tobacco smoke, seven men were seated around a big table, deliberating serious matters.

All except the host, Leonid Krassin, were noted communists and revolutionaries: all homeless people, all in exile, persecuted and wanted by the Russian secret police. Among them were Lenin, leader and soul of the cause, nicknamed by his followers "Old Man"; Bogdanoff, believer in Marxism; Nikitich, an active worker and organizer of the Bolshevik party in Russia; and others. This evening they were gathered to discuss some urgent question relating to revolutionary activities.

Lenin had come from Switzerland especially for

this secret meeting. His arrival had been kept shrouded in deep mystery to baffle the secret police who hunted him. Frequently he had come there to spend two or three days in familiar surroundings with his best friends. Each time he arrived, Krassin's mother had prepared for the "Old Man" his favorite Russian dishes: *pelmenies* (small meat dumplings, boiled), *kasha* (black gruel), and especially *kissel* (a kind of cranberry jelly).

Leonid Krassin, his friend and future Soviet ambassador, at that time was working as engineer for a big concern at St. Petersburg and lived at Kuokkala, not far from the Russian capital, with his mother, wife and children. He was the right hand of Lenin and successfully propagated communistic ideas among his workers. So cautiously he acted that nobody suspected him.

The meeting in question had been planned beforehand. It had been decided that Yuletide was the best time for it. In order not to be disturbed by any one, Krassin had sent his mother, wife and children to his distinguished neighbor, the Russian artist Ily Riepin, who lived not far from

Krassin in his famous "Penates," to celebrate Christmas eve.

It seemed that everything was favoring the secret meeting—nobody and nothing could disturb the conspiracy—and yet from the very beginning matters began to take a bad turn. The conference progressed slowly. Speakers were absent-minded, their speeches unconvincing and not timely. Lenin, as chairman, was in an irritable mood, quibbling and quirking at every word. Sounds of Christmas carols, sung by children in the streets, reached the conspirators' ears and disturbed them. The holiday mood was in full swing.

To make matters worse, an uninvited visitor, a certain V. Hoks, arrived from St. Petersburg to visit his children, who spent their Christmas vacations with Krassin's children. He was not a stranger. Though not a member of the communistic party, he was a sympathizer with it and held his tongue. V. Hoks had brought with him a huge bundle containing several packages of toys, ornaments and candles for the Christmas tree.

"Where are the children?" he asked Krassin.

"All the women and children," answered Krassin, "went to Penates to celebrate Christmas eve. They left us without a Christmas tree."

"Comrades," said Nikitich, "let's proceed with our meeting. Please don't let your attention be diverted. We have very serious problems to discuss."

"What's the idea in calling a meeting at such a time?" asked Hoks.

"Any time is suitable for our meetings—in spite of bourgeois superstitions such as holidays," said Bogdanoff. But his words sounded false.

"What's the matter with us, anyhow?" said Krassin. "Our meeting is dull and slow."

"Well—" said Lenin, trying to joke, "Jesus from Nazareth, whose birthday the world is celebrating, has broken off our meeting."

Everybody was silent and gloomy.

"What have you got here?" asked Lenin, pointing at the packages with his finger.

"Toys, candles, ornaments for the Christmas tree—"

"Comrades," said Lenin quite unexpectedly, "since we have everything for a Christmas tree, why not get a tree—"

"Rotten bourgeois custom!" said Bogdanoff.

"We came here for our conference and not to celebrate Christmas eve," some one said.

"Enough!" said Lenin. Then, addressing Krassin, he asked, "Have you an ax?"

"No," answered Krassin, "but I have a good saw."

"Then let's hew down a good fir-tree."

Everybody was stunned. Lenin himself inviting them to celebrate the holiday! Was he mad? Weird silence reigned among the conspirators and they were much amazed when Krassin, armed with a saw and accompanied by Lenin and Hoks, left the house in search of a fir-tree.

In half an hour they brought a big tree covered with snow. After cleaning it off, they put the tree in one corner of the sitting-room, and everybody—

even those who had protested—began to ornament it. Another half-hour and the Christmas tree was standing gorgeously decorated with many kinds of toys, candles and artificial snow. When the candles had been lighted, the effect was remarkable.

The conference was forgotten. All the conspirators were sitting before the Christmas tree, looking at it.

"Oh, I remember my childhood in Samara" (Lenin's native town), said Lenin pensively. . . . "My parents were religious people. . . . They used to arrange for us children a Christmas tree. How I liked those eves of Christmas! . . . We used to go 'round the tree and sing carols. . . . And then: gifts, candies—Oh," he sighed after a while, "childhood is a beautiful fairy-tale! Yes, a beautiful fairy-tale!"

He rose to his feet and went around the tree three times.

"I remember," he went on, "one carol began with these words: *Oh, holy night! Oh, holy night!* and then, *On Christmas eve the bells were rung. . . . On Christmas eve the mass was sung*, or something like that. . . . I forgot the words."

Then he took his seat and became silent.

"That's enough," said Bogdanoff. "Let's go to our room and proceed with the meeting. The candles are going out."

One by one, all but two of the conspirators left the room.

"Let's go, Old Man," said Krassin.

"Oh, leave me alone," Lenin demurred.

Alone in the room, he looked straight at the dying candles. The conspirators took their seats around the table and were waiting for the chairman. It was about midnight. Suddenly from the sitting-room was heard a stifled cry as of somebody sobbing. Krassin hurriedly went to the sitting-room.

Lenin was sitting in darkness, only two candles burning. He was in the same place as before, head buried in his hands, and crying.

"What's the matter, Old Man?" asked Krassin compassionately.

"Oh, nothing, nothing!" said Lenin, wiping his eyes. "I am very sorry for being so childish. . . . I have been under the spell. . . . I remembered my childhood . . . my parents, who were so attentive to me. . . . Did they ever expect that their son would live in exile . . . persecuted . . . wandering from country to country . . . a hunted animal, having no rest, always in fear of being arrested and sent to Siberia? . . . The world is cruel. . . . People are cruel. . . . Once they crucified the man who came to save them. . . ."

"I did not know," said Krassin, "you were so sentimental."

Lenin quickly rose from his seat and, with eyes still red from weeping, looked fixedly at Krassin.

"Look here, Leonid," he said in a very serious tone. "Let's forget this: it will be between us. . . . And another thing: I can't attend the meeting. Let's postpone it! I am unable to work, to think, to discuss. I am a failure—tonight. . . . Some other day. . . . Some other day."

SCHOOLING PROGRESSES WHILE EDUCATION DECLINES

We let the pupil pick what he ignorantly will

JOHN WILTBYE

FIFTY years or more ago we had a high school in our town. That is no boast but a simple statement of fact. But it might be a boast, for in 1880 few small towns south of the Mason and Dixon line had a public high school.

This institution was housed in a building that was essentially Rutherford B. Hayes, with some unsuccessful attempts at Gothic. At its head was a gentleman with a limp and a white beard, Professor Hall, and I recall that he taught Latin or, it may be, algebra. In those simple days either algebra or Latin was assigned to the principal of the high school, just as in the old-fashioned college the president taught either science or moral philosophy. Professor Hall was commonly reputed a most learned pundit, and had he appeared in our sober streets garbed in a long yellow gown set out with black crescents, with a long tasseled cone for head-gear, I should not have been surprised. To my youthful mind, the enormous mass of the man's learning seemed to call for some extraordinary outward sign.

I do not remember any of the other "professors," but I have a vague recollection that one of them was a lady. She had been a contributor of flowery verse to *Godey's Lady Book*, but it was said by the envious that she owed her firm tenure of the chair of English to the fact that her father had fought and died under Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner. My most vivid recollection of the school is that all the pupils had to study Latin and algebra, and to work hard. No consideration was paid to the sacredness of the individual's gifts. We were so backward that any system which proposed to allow young Jones to "elect" his studies would have been deemed sheer madness. If a boy could not "get" his Latin or his algebra, his failure was held to be evidence that he had no fitness for the higher studies, and out he went. He could not elect library work instead of Latin, or substitute art for algebra. Neither was offered, but even if both had been found in the curriculum, they would not have been chosen by the boy. The choice would have been made by his parents, very likely after conference with Professor Hall.

It never occurred to the troglodytic Hall that since a boy might know more about life and what

it held in store for him, he might be the best judge of what he was not to study. The assumption was that the school provided teachers of Latin, English, history, mathematics, and so on, and that the boy came to the school to occupy himself with the study of Latin and the rest, none omitted. With the content and purpose of the courses, the professors were fairly well satisfied. It had worked well for centuries, and they believed that besides preparing the youth for college it would introduce a few rays of light into his darkened mind, enabling him to become acquainted with it, and by degrees to learn how to use it. If he could not study, or would not, the school was not for him. They never thought of the school as a place in which a lad might spend his time more or less usefully, with hygiene if history repelled him, or with leather-working should Latin prove too much for him. Finally, they believed that they knew more about the youthful mind than the boys themselves did, or their parents.

Conditions have changed in my old town. The newest high school is a manual training school, and there the pupils occupy themselves with a variety of pursuits adjusted to their abilities, and supposed to train their wits and their hands. Latin is no longer taught, I believe, except in the high school for the colored boys and girls. The influence of Booker Washington has not yet seeped into the town. As for the rest of the country, and in particular New York, perhaps I can borrow the picture from an address given last month by Dr. John L. Tildsley, assistant superintendent of schools in New York, at the convention of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. "Today," said Dr. Tildsley, "we hand the boy or girl of 13 or 14 an a la carte course of study," and the pupil picks out the cheapest items. "We let him choose," said Dr. Tildsley, "what he ignorantly will."

The theory is that the youngster has arrived at a stage in his education which endows him with knowledge and good judgment. In fact, he is supposed to be on a par with the makers of the curriculum, and perhaps he is. But that does not qualify him to arrange a course of studies fitted to bring out what is best in him, and, incidentally, so to train his mind that he will be able to make a

fair success in whatever calling in life he may later elect. "The new concept of freedom, as something with which the child starts his education, is wrong," said Dr. Tildsley. "It is something with which he ends it. Freedom is not an inheritance or a gift; it is an achievement that must be won."

Of course, the theory does not work out well in practice. I quite agree with Dr. Tildsley that from one-fifth to two-fifths of the pupils who come with their credentials from the elementary schools "are incapable of doing, or at least not prepared to do, any work that has been thought of as secondary school work." Here we have a hint of the old vicious circle in our educational system. The university complains that few men are really fitted for research, and lays the blame on the college. The college complains of the poor material which the high school sends it; and the high school looks at the boys and girls who have completed the eighth grade, and groans. What the grammar school complains of, I do not know, but probably the kindergarten is not blameless.

But all solve the problem in the same way. The universities turn out doctors, the wiser of whom in later years beg that their dissertation for the doctorate be charitably overlooked as a youthful indiscretion, and the colleges grant the baccalaureate to any applicant who comes up smiling with his neat little packet of credits in his hand, even if he has not much in his head. As for the high school, said Dr. Tildsley:

The principal finds it necessary to emasculate the subjects, reduce the contents, simplify the teaching, lessen the educational values, and then finds that the pupils cannot grasp even this mere shadow of the once honored subjects. So he introduces new subjects and free electives for everybody.

This may be assuredly a mighty groaning and a rattling of dry bones. But it is not education. Upon my word, we make progress when we substitute this hash from the new school, for the roast beef and potatoes of the old.

There is general agreement that "something must be done" to put sanity into the system, but no one seems to know what should be done. My own opinion is that nothing can be done. I also believe that conditions will become much worse in the next decade, and that by that time what we now call a school will be little more than a place in which children are kept until they are eighteen years of age.

Instead of being decreased, the age limits during which school attendance is compulsory will certainly be increased. Since a majority of our young people are incapable of profiting by high-school studies, in the old sense, something must be found by which they can profit. Such pursuits, naturally, will not be academic. They may consist of military drills, or programs such as those now offered in the CCC camps. The school will be an agency for the care of adolescents, but this care will have no reference of any kind to intellectual growth or culture.

Perhaps in another fifty years, a new Ford will set up in his American museum an old-fashioned school. As a curiosity, it will rank with Eli Whitney's original cotton gin, and the first steamboat built by John Fitch.

NURSES FOR THE SICK POOR

COMMITTEES engaged in studying medical costs, and the still more laudable task of reducing them, might profitably learn something from the work of a nursing association which was recently mentioned in the New York press. The members engage in nursing, but not in the manner commonly practised. They are very anxious to secure work, but they will not work for you if you have enough money to pay them. That puts you at once beyond the pale.

The members of this association belong to a Religious Congregation known as the Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor. They nurse the sick in their homes, and quite commonly, once in the home, they do a great deal more than nurse. They prepare meals, get the children off to school, wash the dishes, sweep and dust, and in moments of leisure, close the crack in the window pane with a strip of adhesive, or mend the baby's broken high chair. The Community is quite small, but last year its members took care of 1,149 cases, involving 43,686 hours of nursing. Instead of receiving any fee for this work, they distributed among their patients the sum of \$15,022.

This is service with a capital S. We cannot, of course, ask the same from nurses who have taken up the work as their means of support. Nurses are by no means over-paid, and they earn every penny they receive. Unfortunately, they are not able to give their service to thousands of sick people, especially convalescents, who need help but are not able to pay for it. Our over-crowded public hospitals return the patient at the earliest possible moment, not because his cure is complete, but because his place is needed to take care of patients more gravely ill. Without proper care at home, there is always the grave danger that the patient may suffer a relapse and, as not unfrequently happens, perhaps may even die.

The need of home nursing without cost, or at a cost which persons of moderate means can afford to pay is very great. When the mother in the family is not obliged to work outside the home, the emergency can usually be met, at least in part. But today many mothers are employed outside the home, and when sickness comes they are helpless, unless they can obtain the services of a nurse free of cost. During the last five or six years the various public and private agencies of relief have not been able to furnish enough nurses to meet the demand for such service.

Devoted as all nurses usually are, Catholic nurses can do better work in Catholic homes, or homes that should be Catholic, than nurses who are not Catholics. Priests who have worked among the sick poor know quite well that the spiritual influence of the Catholic nurse, especially if she be a Sister, is very great. Often the priest succeeds in bringing some poor wandering sheep back to the Fold only because of the example and prayers of the devoted Catholic nurse.

P. L. B.

WITH SCRIP AND STAFF

SOME THOUGHTS ON KINGS' MARRIAGES

NOW that the Man Who Was King is definitely back in private life, the Pilgrim feels he can say a word about him without taking recourse to the well-known privilege enjoyed by cats and commoners and assumed by the United Journalists of the World.

I have no desire to add my piping voice to the booming chorus proclaiming his merits and demerits. Just one observation occurs to my mind. Leaving out of consideration any probable ulterior political motives or personal antagonisms that may have helped to inspire the rigid stand taken by the King's advisors, the fact is that the ruling out of romantic evasions in the matter of his marriage is a tribute not only, as this Review has observed, to the British people's innate sense of decency, but likewise to the essentially social nature of matrimony.

The social nature of matrimony means, in plain English, that people cannot form a permanent union for the sake of themselves alone. The social community has an interest therein which no one can escape on the mere grounds of sentiment. If the party to the union is the head of a nation, then the entire nation has an interest in his marriage. And if he is an emperor in his own right, then the empire is concerned.

"People in the United States understand nothing, nothing, ab-so-lutely *nothing* about England," remarked the highly discursive, athletic young Englishman to his trustful-looking spouse as they occupied the seat next to the Pilgrim's on the afternoon train. She murmured a bright assent, and perhaps they were right. That's the way we Yankees do feel about Britannia at times. Nevertheless, even with this serious handicap on my understanding, I do not quite follow the reasoning of one of our British Catholic contemporaries which holds, if I get the argument correctly, that as long as the King is merely a ceremonial figure it is not fair to hold him to a more rigid interpretation of the marriage laws (or marriage conventions) than falls on any one of his ordinary subjects.

After all, even being a ceremonial figure is a national job. It is a job that someone must do, and do extremely well, if the whole system is to hold together. The job-contract is at very high tension as contracts go. The pay is huge, in proportion to the actual work done, and the social privileges are enormous. On the other hand, the job demands from its nature a complete personal self-immolation of a certain type which totally excludes private choice from many important areas where it is commonly exerted by even the lowliest human being.

It partakes of the disadvantages experienced by light-house keepers, by the steeple-cock in Hans Christian Andersen's fable, or by personal bodyguards to the President, like the late Gus Gennrich, without a compensating functional satisfaction.

Once the work is contracted for, I see no reason why matrimonial life, of all things, should fall into the exempt area, particularly when the traditions of the ceremonial position require that wife and children and the monarch's relation to them be one of the biggest parts of the show. It may be all wrong to subject a poor human mortal to such a curious requirement though there always seem to be plenty at hand to take the job as soon as it is vacated. But if it is assumed, a man would naturally seem to be bound by all the things that go with it, as an admiral of the navy is bound to say goodbye to wife and home for a large part of his professional career.

Where my heart does soften somewhat to the Duke of Windsor is in the circumstance that public opinion suddenly applied reason in his instance when for matrimonial matters it had been steadily applying unreason since even the purely romantic view of marriage became the favorite theme of poets, playwrights, novelists, and sciolistic sociologists. How many novels Edward has read, how many plays he has seen, how many discussions he has listened to during the twenty-five years of his expectation that ridiculed all objectivity in marriage standards, that proclaimed reckless individualism, that stamped and spat upon any social responsibility in the marriage bond, he himself, I ween, could not enumerate. To keep his head straight in such a topsy-turvy world; to keep perpetually pinching himself and say: "I, future Emperor and King, cannot marry à la Hedda Gabler, or Flaubert, or Anatole France, or Westermarck for all that; I must keep sane in a morally insane world!" that is indeed to ask more than most human psychologies can endure.

And unfortunately, it is what is asked of their children by many of our supposedly respectable parents, who look forward fondly to well-regulated filial matrimonial establishments in their own old age, yet are willing to expose their young ones to complete religious illiteracy during the formative period of their educational years. God help old and young alike when they wake up and discover the reality!

So I do not absolve Edward. I think it all had to come. But there are thousands of accomplices in his own undoing who still wax fat and honored on the pay and applause of a public that has ceased to apply reason to morality. And through his abdication he stands better cleared of inconsistency than the public obliged to disown him. **THE PILGRIM**

CAPITALISM CONVERTED

HITHERTO we have looked on the National Association of Manufacturers as a group of Bourbons. Perhaps that is what the Association once was, but another story was told at the convention held in the second week of December in New York. The manufacturers now appear to have forgotten much of what they once thought was true, and to have acquired several salutary ideas.

A brief extract from the address by the Association's president, C. M. Chester, will show what these ci-devant Bourbons have learned. Mr. Chester spoke right out in meeting before 1799 associates, and said that business had a duty to the common welfare that was higher than its duty to make money. It ought to put every employable man back to work, stand squarely against monopoly and unfair dealing, live up to all its responsibilities, and let the public know all the facts.

Now it would be unkind, and perhaps incorrect, to conclude that big business has come to the repentance seat because of the large club which it fears the Administration is about to wield. A conversion of this kind may be sincere, but it is always open to suspicion. When the club is withdrawn, the repentance is apt to disappear. It seems to us quite possible that big business has at last learned that business can be square and still remain big, and that there is much truth in the copy-book adage to the effect that honesty, when all is said and done, is the best policy.

The bad name which capitalism bears shows that big business has not always lived up to the principles advocated by the Association in 1936. Capitalism is commonly reckoned in this country as one of the baser forms of crime. In itself, the use of capital is no more a crime than bi-metallism or botany. The crime that has been attributed to capitalism in the United States really belongs to the criminals who for many years have associated themselves with the system, and at times have controlled it. These men not only recognized no duty to promote the public welfare, but none to promote the welfare even of associates who might join with them in a common project. Business, they said, was business, and not a parlor game. What they meant was that business would obey no law, human or Divine, that could be evaded.

It has taken big business many years to find out that the system has not worked well. The result has not been uninterrupted prosperity, but alternating seasons of feasting and fasting, and for a majority of our people the fasts have been longer and more numerous than the feasts. The history of capitalism's relation to the wage-earner shows unnecessary and cruel conflicts which in the end have caused the employer almost as much loss as the employe. Instead of uniting capital and labor, capitalism has kept them in hostile camps. Possibly the National Association of Manufacturers has discovered a method of separating capitalism from the criminals who have so long abused it. We hope so.

EDITOR

JOBLESS AT FORTY-FIVE

HARD as it is for any man to be without work, the plight of the worker who at forty-five finds himself without remunerative employment is the most tragic of all. In the absence of a Federal census of employment, we do not know exactly how many men forty-five years of age are now receiving public or private charity, but careful estimates made at Washington indicate that the number has risen very perceptibly since 1933. We have heard nothing recently of the commission which the President was to appoint to study this very distressing problem. The plan should not be dropped.

TIN BOXES FOR SPANI

PROPAGANDA, wave after wave, is rolling over from Spain and out from the headquarters and semi-headquarters of the American Communists. Nothing to equal it has been witnessed since the flood of propaganda was loosed against the Huns of Germany before our entry into the World War. It is the Moors that are now the perpetrators of such horrible atrocities, the savage Moors who are over-running and devastating a stricken white people. Taking the stories at their face value, one would conclude that millions of Moors have swept up from the vast and arid deserts of Africa, and have settled upon the fair and cultured garden of Spain.

Franco and his army are painted in the vivid colors of thugs and ruffians, of outlaws and robbers and brutes, of desecrators of Spain's most beautiful and precious monuments, of destroyers of civilization, enemies of the people and democracy. Franco's army, the propagandists imply, specializes in the massacre of infants, orphans and women with babes in their arms. Most heartrending pictures proving their brutality are coming direct from Barcelona and are being distributed widely in the United States. Franco, it would seem, is drowning in blood an innocent people that seeks only to live in peace and quiet, is aiming to establish himself as a tyrannical dictator whose sole purpose is to crush the poor and destroy democracy.

The Catholic Church in Spain is a third target of the propagandists. The enormous, the prodigious wealth of the Church is exaggerated beyond the computation of the most expert

FEDERAL PENSIONS

THE Government is by far the largest employer of labor in the world, and it has for its employes what is probably the world's worst pension system. The pension is too small, and the retirement age which, for women, is seventy, is too advanced. Incidentally, in this connection "pension" is a misnomer, since the employe pays for what he gets by a percentage regularly deducted from his wage. Any private insurance company would grant better terms, and Washington should, but thus far Congress has refused. Its reluctance would indicate that it is inclined to profiteer on Federal employees.

SPANISH DEMOCRACY

arithmetician. The clergy and the bishops, apparently, did everything in their power, through centuries, to kill off any aspirations of the working class to freedom, to education, to the assertion of their rights.

Repeated and repeated and still further repeated, impressions such as we have noted above are being accepted as undeniable truth by intelligent people in the United States. Many Catholics, even, do not realize what gullible fools they have become through credence of this communistically inspired propaganda. But Catholics as a whole will not be deceived by it, whether it be blatant or subtle. Fra Sarasola, in his tour through the country, may have been of great aid to his Communist allies in their appeals for money to aid the Spanish Reds, but he was held in contempt by the Catholics whom he has betrayed. He leaves this week, a few days after the arrival of another so-called Catholic defender of Spanish communism. Ygnaz Eugenio, announced as "the editor of the Catholic newspaper, *Cruz y Rayo*, and a student at Louvain Catholic University" has been sent as a member of the United Youth of Spain delegation to lecture throughout this country. As bad an odor will linger from him as from Sarasola.

Thousands of American dollars are being collected by these Spanish Communist delegates; thousands of pennies and nickels are rattling in the tin boxes of beggars for Spain's Leftists in the highways and the byways. Whatever of this money will ever reach Spain will be used for crushing democracy out of Spain.

HOW FAR BELLIGERENCE?

DESPITE the "leakage" in the barque of Peter of which there has been much interesting discussion in AMERICA for the past few weeks, the fact remains that there are a great number of converts coming into the Church today, and many of them people of such high intellectual attainments that they can give a most entertaining and intelligent account of their own acceptance of the Faith and the motives which prompted it. It would be interesting to make a scientific study of these written reports and see what tactics were best employed by those who want to spread the Faith to the outsider, whether our course should be one of argument and challenge, or one of sympathy and affection. One man will say that a certain book started him on the road; another will say it was the same book which kept him out so long. And the book may be anything from Huysmans to Dr. Orchard. "Newman," said one of our distinguished converts from the Anglican ministry, "started a tradition of conversion in the tragic vein. Why should a conversion be tragic? My own was all contentment and delight. It was as easy as changing a shirt, especially as I knew I was getting a clean one." Ronald Knox said of Arnold Lunn that his earlier book should not have been called *Now, I See* but *Oh, I See*. Surely there must be argument, surely there must be challenge, sometimes there must almost be war, and Belloc is all for this. But who will believe our story of the little Catholic girl who has a Jewish merchant on the border of the Faith, because, as he said, "on the day of her First Holy Communion her mother brought her over to see me, and do you know what she did? She gave me a kiss! And I've felt different towards the Catholic Church ever since." Ideas about Christianity are not Christianity. Christianity, as Father Martindale has pointed out, is a person, is Christ. And the more He is seen reflected in the life of each of us, the closer the world will come into contact with him. And the only class towards whom Our Lord was belligerent were the hypocrites. But who shall say that most of those outside the Church are such? Think of what one little seven year old girl could do with an innocent show of affection! It is hardly to be recommended that we send our little daughters around kissing Jewish merchants and Gentile grocers. But sometimes the arguing Christian rather than the teaching Christian, the acting Christian rather than the living Christian throws logs across the road to keep out the man of good-will. Our business is not to teach men who we are, but who Christ is. And this is not always best done by scolding. It is interesting to notice that in the recent affair between the King of England and Mrs. Simpson, everyone suggested, notoriously the Archbishop of Canterbury, abuse and condemnation. It seemed not to occur to many that this strange couple should be prayed for.

We had occasion recently to talk to a Jew to whom we go to get our eyeglasses mended when they are broken. "Have you never felt," we said to

him "that there is, despite our enormous differences, a strange sympathy between a Jew and a Catholic?" "I have" he said. "Have you ever met a Catholic priest of whom you were afraid, or to whom you could not talk with confidence?" "No." "Well, what about it?" "Put it there," he replied, and he extended his hand. Nothing may come of this simple incident. But who knows?

PRAYERS FOR POPE PIUS

ALWAYS vital and vigorous in mind and body, His Holiness now feels the weight of his nearly eighty years and of the ailments that have recently been increasing. A late dispatch from Vatican City states that he expressed some annoyance when he read reports of the state of his health in the European newspapers. That would be most characteristic of this dynamic soul curbed by weakness of body from doing the work of God. He wishes no alarm to be felt about himself. He refuses to be alarmed over his condition and bravely insists that the remaining time allotted to him on earth be devoted wholly to the task to which he has been called.

While the Faithful can sympathize with his ardent zeal in refusing to take the rest ordered by the physicians, while they admire his terrific driving-force in his insistence that he be helped to his armchair and day by day transact the affairs that claim attention, they are concerned lest the added exertion may hasten the day when he may be called into the presence of the Pastor Whose sheep he has tended and guarded in these troubled and quarrelsome years.

During his fourteen-year Pontificate he has defined Catholic thought in notable encyclicals on economics, capital and labor, the social order, marriage and the family, education, the priesthood and numerous other contemporary subjects. He has regulated Catholic Action so that the Church throughout the world stands ready and united despite the assaults that have been increasing in vehemence in every country. He has inspired the Faithful with new ideals, new vigor, with a revived militant zeal.

One task preoccupies him now more than all else. In his declining days he has seen the uprising of a heresy that is likely to be more destructive than any other system of errors that has arisen during the nineteen hundred years of Catholic history. Marxism has spread in a poisonous growth. It will strive to disrupt the Church of God for the years that are pending. It may rear itself up in such strength that in an inevitable and final battle all men will be sharply divided between a Communistic atheism and materialism and a Catholic spirituality. Pope Pius, defender of God, relinquishes not his duty, though illness assail him. Day by day, we are assured by reports from the Vatican, he directs personally the battle against the forces of evil that rise in Moscow and infect all Europe and the Americas.

Prayers are our best gifts to the Holy Father, especially at this critical time and during this

Christmas season. Let us plead with God that He may ease the mind and the soul of Pius during the days granted to him, that He may lighten the burden of sorrow over the martyrdom of his people in Russia and Mexico and Germany, that He may soothe the intense grief caused by the carnage of his children in Spain. Let us beg for Pope Pius his old-time ardor in thought and action, his wonted vigor in combatting the evils of our age. May God give Pius our Pope strength and life. But if Eternal Providence has unalterably decreed otherwise, may his salute to his King be answered by an enfolding of him in the arms of his King.

NAZARETH

FOR the Sunday within the Octave of Christmas the Church appoints a reading from the second chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mark. We go with Joseph, and with Mary who carries the Divine Child in her arms, into the temple, where we meet Simeon and Anna. In the Child, Simeon sees "a sign that shall be contradicted" and to Our Lady he speaks of the sword of sorrow which one day will pierce her heart. Of Anna, we are told that she was a prophetess, an aged woman of holy life, "who departed not from the temple, by fastings and prayers, serving day and night." Her devotion won her the great privilege of seeing the Divine Infant in Whom she saw at once the Word made flesh.

Then Mary and Joseph take the Child, and go back to Nazareth. In that holy house, Our Divine Lord "grew and was strengthened, full of wisdom, and the grace of God was in Him." Outwardly the house of Joseph did not differ from that of his neighbors, but within it was an earthly paradise. Our Lord grew in it as other children, slowly unfolding His knowledge. As God, He was, of course, omniscient, and as man He possessed an infused knowledge wider and deeper than the sum of all human knowledge naturally acquired. But His experimental knowledge, He acquired as other children acquire it, and in this knowledge, He could "grow." But that nothing of an extraordinary nature was seen or done in that holy house is clear. In later years, His neighbors asked, when they heard that he was teaching and preaching: "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, the carpenter?" Evidently, then, as far as the little town of Nazareth knew, the childhood of Our Divine Lord, Who became like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, was like that of other children of His time.

But there was peace and happiness in that holy house, for love ruled it. Mary busied herself with the simple tasks of the house, and Joseph toiled in his shop nearby, and the little Baby on His rug on the floor was the third member of this earthly Trinity. Soon He would begin to talk, to totter across the floor, to caress His Mother with little Hands that one day would be pierced for our salvation.

May the Divine Child teach us to make our homes other Nazareths!

CHRONICLE

WASHINGTON NOTES. Word was received at the Capital on December 14 that Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected President of the United States. On the day before, the 531 members of the Electoral College met in their respective State Capitals. Roosevelt was given 523 votes; Landon received 8. Some doubt was expressed about Rhode Island's votes; they went to Roosevelt. . . . On December 16, the President arrived in Washington; the twenty-eight day cruise to South America, in which 12,000 miles were covered, set a new record for distance on Presidential journeys. "A very delightful trip has come to an end," he declared. As for the Buenos Aires Peace Conference, he foresaw "far-reaching" and "gratifying" accomplishments. . . . He discussed plans for his second inauguration on January 20, and favored the "simplest possible formula." . . . The Council for Industrial Progress, attended by about 1,000 labor leaders, industrialists, observers, concluded a two-day session under the chairmanship of Major George L. Berry, Coordinator for Industrial Cooperation. Countless reports were submitted. A three-point program was evolved: recommendation on fair trade practices, which was in reality an approval of the NRA revised to favor the "little man"; amendments to make the anti-trust laws more effective; a system of guaranteed loans to small business. Preparation of the program for legislative enactment was left to Major Berry. . . . Great Britain sent a note on its war debt to the United States. The note did not refuse payment; but it did not offer payment. It was interpreted simply as a default. "His Majesty's Government will be ready to reopen discussions on the matter whenever circumstances are such as to warrant the hope that a satisfactory result may be reached," the note stated. France followed its usual default-habit, but in a polite note indicated it looked forward to an acceptable plan for payment. In all, thirteen nations defaulted; Finland alone paid its war debt installment. The amount due from the debtor nations this December was \$155,093,937. The total due, including old payments, was \$1,315,052,424.

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INTER-AMERICAN CONFERENCE. After a rather hectic week of changes, jockeying for victory and emotional oratory, the Conference finally gave its approval to the machinery for making peace a strong and vital weapon against war in the Americas. . . . All twenty-one American nations, assembled at the Conference's second plenary session unanimously adopted the collective security convention, the non-intervention protocol and the resolution calling upon those nations who have not yet done so to ratify existing peace treaties. . . . The collective security pact means the obligation of uni-

fied action for common defense, whenever a war threatens, whether within the Americas, or a war anywhere which might threaten the peace of the Americas. The non-intervention protocol defines intervention in any country to be sufficient threat to peace to warrant starting the machinery against the guilty party. This lifts the "Good-Neighbor" policy to an inter-American treaty obligation. . . . While Latin America considers this the death knell of the Monroe Doctrine, the United States holds that it has become an inter-American policy by the collective security convention. . . . Consideration of the proposals for an inter-American Court of Justice was postponed until the Pan-American conference at Lima in 1938. Although the United States would not join such a court, the American delegation decided not to oppose its establishment by the other nations. . . . The neutrality convention finally passed did not differ substantially from the United States draft made public earlier, but respects the prior obligations of those party to the League of Nations. . . . Secretary Hull got credit for the ultimate harmony reached and the avoidance of clashes, mainly through his policy of having the fights made in the executive sessions rather than on the floor of the Conference or at public committee meetings. . . . The United States delegates would have liked to have seen passed the permanent consultative committee of Foreign Ministers. The Latin Americans did not favor rigid definition of procedure in advance of the outbreak of war, before the peculiar conditions arise. This was more in accord with the Administration's stand at home as opposed to that championed by Senator Nye and others. . . . The non-intervention protocol was principally the work of the Mexican delegation and was a trade for Mexico's support of the remainder of program.

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ENGLAND. King George VI, in naval uniform, stood in the Throne Room of St. James Palace. . . . A group of "Lords Spiritual and Temporal of the Realm" in full panoply of office, swore allegiance to him, proclaimed that "the High and Mighty Prince Albert Frederick Arthur George is now become our only lawful and rightful Liege Lord, George the Sixth." . . . The new King then announced his adherence to the principles of constitutional government, conferred the Dukedom of Windsor on his brother, Edward. . . . He swore to defend the Protestant succession, the security of the Church of Scotland. . . . Out on the balcony of St. James' Palace came heralds of the realm and trumpeters. The trumpets sounded and George VI was proclaimed to the people. Massed troops below presented arms; bands struck up: *God Save the King*. Throughout London, throughout the Empire, the new King and

Emperor was proclaimed. . . . George VI, in reading his declaration, spoke clearly, impressively, with hardly a trace of his former impediment in speech. . . . He will be crowned May 12, the date set by Edward. . . . The destroyer, *Fury*, with the new Duke of Windsor on board, slipped out from England, landed him in France. The Archbishop of Canterbury broadcast a condemnation of Edward for his projected marriage to Mrs. Simpson and for his choice of friends. The Duke of Windsor arrived at Enzesfeld Castle, near Vienna, as Baron de Rothschild's guest. Gray-uniformed gendarmes kept the throng of curious away. Automobiles from all over Europe converged on the little town of 500 inhabitants. The Duke plans to visit an ear specialist in Vienna.

WINTER IN SPAIN. The twenty-second week of the Spanish War saw the conflicting armies gripped by wintry blasts. . . . There was little change around Madrid. Insurgents attacked in the northwest sector of the capital on the front running out to Escorial and other localized assaults occurred without notable change in either line. . . . Inability to control the anarchist and syndicalist labor groups in Catalonia, induced Premier José Tarradellas to resign. . . . Both the Insurgent and Leftist leaders rejected the idea of a plebiscite and of mediation. . . . Each side demanded unconditional surrender of the other. . . . Following the resignation of Tarradellas in Catalonia, a new ministry was formed, under pressure from Moscow. Tarradellas was finally persuaded to resume the role of Premier. Moscow excluded all Trotsky elements from the new Government. Three members of the Left Republican party, four of the anarcho-syndicalist labor unions, three members of the Socialist labor union and one representative of the peasant bloc constitute the new Ministry.

HITLER HESITATES. Chancellor Hitler instructed Nazi leaders to cease their attacks on Christianity. The Government-appointed Protestant Church administration had protested against the increasing anti-Christian propaganda. . . . But the more potent factor is Hitler's desire not to stir up any antagonism among the peasants while the Four-Year Plan for a self-sufficient Germany is under way. . . . When Nazis removed crucifixes from the schools in their district, the Oldenburg peasantry demanded the restoration of the Christian symbols. . . . Germany is short 1,000,000 tons of wheat, 1,000,000 tons of rye and will have to import both. Disciplinary measures for the newspaper which reported this shortage were being considered by the Goebbels Ministry.

DE VALERA MOVES. Through the Dail Eireann, President Eamon deValera pushed two bills. One removed the King from the Free State Constitution, abolished the office of Governor-General. . . . The other made effective Edward's abdication, con-

firmed the Duke of York's accession, the new King to be regarded as the symbol of cooperation between members of the British Commonwealth of Nations and to act for the Free State in external affairs only.

CHIANG KAI-SHEK KIDNAPPED. General Chiang Kai-shek, dictator of China, journeyed to Shensi Province to investigate conditions there. Troops under General Chang Hsueh-liang staged a mutiny against the Nanking Government, and their leader, General Chang, seized China's strong man, Chiang Kai-shek. He demanded a declaration of war against Japan, a pledge to recover all lost Chinese territory, including Manchuria and a readmission of Communists to the Nanking Government. . . . Chiang Kai-shek refused to discuss the matter; told Chang he would have to treat with the Central Government. . . . Nanking started an army toward Sian; determined to release Chiang, avert the threat of civil war and chaos in China. . . . Chiang Kai-shek, a protégé of the late Dr. Sun Yat-sen, rose to power with the aid of Communists; then broke with them, expelled them from power. He has built up the army, unified China, become its sole hope. . . . When Japan invaded Manchuria, and later attacked Shanghai, Chiang assumed a passive role. . . . He felt China was too weak militarily to resist successfully; thought it better to wait, build up an army. Recently he has been stiffening in his opposition to Japanese encroachments. General Chang Hsueh-liang, "young marshal," is a bitter foe of Japan. His father was blown to bits when his train was traveling in Manchuria. He speaks English with a Scotch accent.

CHRISTMAS IN MOSCOW. Christmas trees, covered with tinsel; Santa Claus in red overcoat and white whiskers, appeared in the windows of Moscow stores. . . . The trees are called New Year's trees. Santa is called "Grandfather Frost." . . . One young girl in Moscow exclaimed; "Oh, look at the Christmas tree—I mean the New Year's tree." . . . Until last year the Soviet regime would not tolerate anything that even looked like a Christmas tree. . . . The Seventh International Congress on Genetics which was scheduled for next August in Moscow was cancelled by the Soviet Government.

FOOTNOTES. The Council of the League of Nations closed its discussion of the Spanish War danger, referred it to the London non-intervention committee. Replies were received to the Anglo-French mediation proposal. Germany doubted the feasibility of a plebiscite, as did Italy. Both, however, promised cooperation if any practicable method is discovered of mediating in the Spanish intermecine conflict. . . . In Finland, President Pehr Evind Svinhufvud, celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday. He was hailed through the land as the Father of his country. . . . Pope Pius continued to show improvement, but his condition was still serious.

CORRESPONDENCE

LEAKAGE PLUS DECLINE

EDITOR: The discussions on the question of how many people leave the Church each year or how many remain in the Church without any more than a perfunctory practice only proves how deeply Protestant ideas have bitten into the mentality of all of us in this country—clergy and laity alike. All the letters assume that the Church must be 100 per cent efficient.

Well, that is the peculiar tenet of that section of Protestantism most profoundly opposed to Catholicism. It is gloomy Calvin's idea that the Church consisted only of the elect, that there are no slackers in Christ's Church. It is not the idea of Christ Our Lord, Who spoke of the Church as netting good and bad fishes, as flourishing with tares amidst the wheat, as having in it wise and foolish.

Even the best care of priests and bishops for their flocks will not prevent desertions and defections. Did not Judas secede from the primitive Church under the eye of Christ Himself? Did not the Church of the fourth century marvel that it had suddenly gone Arian? Did not the whole English episcopate, with the exception of Saint John Fisher, bow before the storm of the Reformation? Nor were the lay folk any better, as the stubborn Faith of More proved. The Catholic nobility in all countries at the Reformation licked their chops and fixed their fangs into the body of Mother Church. The story of the French Revolution tells the same tale, and the very Catholic Basque country, the cradle of Saints Ignatius and Xavier, allied to Communism, brings the story up to date.

We are no better than our fathers, and considering the demands that the Church makes it is a miracle that there are so many in it rather than that any are out of it.

In this day when the mailed fist of totalitarianism lies heavy on the Church, let us not hamper our action by judging ourselves by the standards of seventeenth-century Calvinism.

West Baden, Ind. ALFRED G. BRICKEL, S.J.

EDITOR: In addition to the great losses by leakage, the Church has for the last few years suffered from a sharp decline in infant baptisms and to some extent in marriages.

According to the *Catholic Directory* the Catholic population of continental United States was 20,078,202 in 1929 and 20,609,302 in 1935. This represents an increase of 531,100 in six years, or an average of 88,500 annually. At this rate it will take a long time indeed before we shall be able to speak of a Catholic America. The phenomenal increase of former years by immigration having ceased, we now depend almost solely on increase by births and conversions. But births have declined rapidly since

1929, and conversions have not yet reached the 75,000 mark in a year.

Marriages: Five dioceses do not report on marriages, but taking the figures given by the reporting dioceses and adding an approximation based on the population of the five non-reporting dioceses, we get the following:

1928	203,637
1929	202,878
1930	198,137
1931	191,328
1932	180,950
1933	165,291
1934	190,690
1935	218,113
Total	1,551,024

A few dioceses report the number of mixed marriages. The percentage is about 33 or 34 of all marriages contracted. If this is true of the whole country, there are 517,000 mixed marriages in 8 years. How many losses are to be traced to this enormous number of mixed marriages will be revealed only on the day of Judgment.

Infant baptisms: These are reported by all except four dioceses. Estimates for these four, plus the number actually reported by the other dioceses give these results: The highest number of infant baptisms is found in 1929. Since then there has been a steady decline, reaching the lowest level in 1935. This decline continued in 1935 despite the fact that during the previous year (1934) there was an increase of marriages by about 25,400.

The total number of infant baptisms since 1929 is given in the following table:

1929	656,689
1930	619,670
1931	605,713
1932	591,706
1933	556,973
1934	557,339
1935	556,375
Total	4,144,465

The cumulative decline since 1929 is approximately as follows:

1930	37,000
1931	51,000
1932	65,000
1933	99,700
1934	99,300
1935	100,300
Total	452,300

Hence at the end of 1935 there were about 452,300 infant baptisms fewer than there would have been if the number of 1929 had remained stationary. In reality, that number should have increased year by year.

The cause of this decline? We may mention the following: decrease of marriages, delayed marriages, divorces, sterility—both natural and artifi-

cial, and the rapidly growing use of the safe period, especially by young married couples and those who could well afford to have large families, but refuse to have them from motives of self-indulgence. Most of these causes can be summed up in one: loss of genuinely Catholic ideals in married life. But what of the Church's future if Catholic ideals in married life disappear, and pagan ones prevail?

Texas

SYMPATHIZER

EDITOR: Your Worried Pastor has started something. He has given vivid expression to the thoughts that arise in me. He is in the East. I am in the far West; but at that I doubt whether his parish is any older than mine.

No need of offering statistics. Enough to say sorrowfully that my experience approximates very closely to his. In my parish the number of bad marriages, of mixed marriages, and of so-called common-law marriages is astounding. And so with the other disturbing conditions which his census and our own religious survey have revealed.

We used to be told *talis grex, qualis rex*. But if the clergy are above the average in ability, in zeal, in devotion to the cause, if the teaching and other Religious communities in the parish are living up to their best traditions,—what then? What is to be done to stem the tide of worldliness that threatens to sweep away the younger generation?

California

ANOTHER WORRIED ONE

EDITOR: I wonder if Worried Pastor has tried the Liturgy to stop the leakage? His parish visitors might gather what the parishioners think of the Mass. Are they taught to understand the Mass, to use the Missal? Or are they passive spectators? Are Requiem Masses the prevailing mode? Does the Divine Office play its proper role in the parish? Are Vespers and Compline chanted by all, not just sung by a choir trained to entertain?

The liturgical movement is the living fountain struck by Pope Pius X, who issued this statement: "The primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit is participation in the liturgical services and in the solemn prayer of the Church."

Brooklyn, N. Y.

LYDIA AVERY

END OF SMUGNESS

EDITOR: Apropos of your editorial, *Religion in College* (October 24), I write to emphasize especially the low standard of elementary religious education which so widely obtains in the United States. We laud to the skies the efficiency of Catholic education. We are wont to cherish a smug security that all is well with the little ones.

However I ask: Are all these claims justified? Is it not possible that much that is said in praise of religious instruction borders on braggadocio? I contend that it does, that all is not well with religious instructions, and that there is much truth in the charge that religion is the worst taught branch in the elementary curriculum. To give detailed evidence would exceed limits. Suffice it to say that an

honest survey of conditions in many elementary schools will reveal the lamentable fact that religious instruction only too often consists in little more than dry drill work in memorizing religious formulas, unintelligible to the children, with apparently no thought of correlating one religious truth with another, and without making any effort to make application of religious principles to the daily lives of children, so as to enable them to live their religion.

To my mind the very fact that an unpedagogical catechism text, like the *Baltimore*, has found almost universal acceptance in the United States is proof in itself of the low standard of religious instruction. It would be unthinkable to foist a like text in any other subject on the teachers of this country.

When I first began drawing attention to these facts some six or eight years ago, I was promptly counted among the pedagogic cranks, while the majority of my catechetical enemies vociferously contended that the *Baltimore Catechism* was as simple as could be, that the children had nothing to do but to learn it, and all teachers had to do was to see that they did learn it.

Happily there are now evidences of improvement. A committee of bishops has set itself to the task of revising and correcting the old *Baltimore* text. It is now being recognized that there is such a thing as sound pedagogics to be applied to the teaching of religion. The establishment of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine is not now regarded as an empty dream. And study clubs are not deemed an impossibility.

Louisville, Ky. REV. JOSEPH A. NEWMAN

DRY SILENCE

EDITOR: The letter of John J. O'Connor, S.J. (November 21) on the Mexican situation contains some terrible truths. The late political campaign showed that many who call themselves Catholics are party members before they are Catholics. Not a public protest was made at the Democratic Convention on the part of any Catholic delegate or politician against the Administration's callous disregard of the sufferings of Catholics in Mexico. The subject was not mentioned in the political campaign by any speaker I know of. Even many Catholic papers that not long ago attacked the secular press for its conspiracy of silence on Mexican affairs—even these same papers adopted the attitude of silence on the anti-Catholic persecution in Mexico. The reason was evidently not to embarrass the Administration.

Such action on the part of Catholics is hard to understand. The whole affair is very discouraging. These people could deplore uncomplimentary remarks about the President, but when it comes to helping the Catholics of Mexico the reelection of the President is of more importance. I wonder if these Catholics understand the meaning of the Mystical Body of Christ.

Ohio

DISGUSTED

LITERATURE AND ARTS

JOHANNES JÖRGENSEN AT SEVENTY YEARS

JOHN LaFARGE, S.J.

NOW that he has reached seventy, and all his compatriots are honoring him, the face of Johannes Jörgensen, if I judge by his pictures, is interesting and attractive. Not handsome, neither Greek nor Roman nor Nordic, but simply a pair of keen eyes under a wrinkled brow that has thought, suffered, questioned, and now enjoys peace.

Ordinarily, I believe it is unfair to discuss faces of literary people. One of the great consolations of writing, as compared with preaching, lecturing, teaching, or acting, is that nobody need see you in the flesh unless they perversely insist. Publishers require portraits for their catalogs but these are just tabs, mere memory aids to make readers attentive each time this particular phiz produces a new book. There seems to be no particular reason why a good many writers should look *that* way rather than any other way, unless they are personalities of the Samuel Johnson or Chesterton type. We all know the sinking feeling that comes when you first see the outward form that houses one of your pet beautiful souls. And if some poor, deluded creature who has never seen you before thinks *you* are one of these beautiful souls, the only charitable thing is to carry along with you a small flask of smelling salts for such emergencies.

What arrests me, however, in Jörgensen's case is that what started him off on the long and adventurous path of his life's spiritual pilgrimage was the fact that in his youth he had no distinctive face. Indeed, he was painfully convinced of his own homeliness, pug-nosed, dragging after him a green carpet-bag to school. As a result, "hope and hate burst into flame: hate of the privileged, the handsome, the rich; hope of the re-adjustment of values, of revolution, of the downfall of the gods, of the day of doom. Then his pen would race wildly across the paper."

But why bring it up? Because the contrast between Jörgensen's youthful insignificance and aged distinction is not just the usual phenomenon of experience leaving its impression upon the human visage. It is the clue to a subtle point which some of his own countrymen have emphasized of late in their studies for his seventieth birthday; a point

touching on the significance of his own life's work.

By his own acknowledgment, hate, not love, started him on the road to religious faith. His hate was bitter, realistic, and psychologically kin to the hate he felt for himself. What he hated was the sham of so-called liberal and atheistic emancipation. "Evil as I was," he writes in his *Autobiography*, "I could be approached on the side of hate, but not of love. My conversion began with my hating. I could not love anyone but myself. . . . When the thermometer was at eight below zero in the morning, and one knelt before the stove to clean it out, red ashes and gray ashes and big lumps of burnt-up stone that made one poet's fingers dusty and black, and cracked them till they bled, because the skin was chapped with the cold, and one knew that there were still two stoves to be cleaned and heated—then one understood very thoroughly that emancipation was a lie and a deceit."

In his lucid little poem, *Confiteor*, published in his *Confession (Bekendelse)*, in 1894, he spoke of himself as one emerging from an "infernal thicket that never ended—where I wept from torment and sorrow . . . till my soul turned to the light, till I knelt to pray." Then he saw the dawn in the distant East and begged for the guiding hand of Heaven's Queen.

The "hell-wood" was the hell of atheism, crass materialism, with its attendant moral morass, that was all that the new intellectual movement headed by the pontifical George Brandes had to offer to youthful Denmark. Haeckel, Büchner, Renan, Zola; the Russian Nihilists Bakunin, Chernishevsky, whom young Jörgensen mystically revered, these were the gods of the outer world to which Danish youth was bidden to bow down.

But escape by revolt from the grosser assaults on flesh and spirit brought with it the subtler temptation to fall a victim to the dilemma of Sören Kierkegaard. This great Lutheran spiritual leader saw no reconciliation between religion and the esthetic. The soul seeking for righteousness must choose *either-or*: either a morally meaningless, purely hedonistic pursuit of beauty, or a stern renunciation of the world and a rigid asceticism, if

the spirit was to triumph over sin. How could a young man struggling with a very real world, flesh, and devil hope to find moral liberation through religion as the Catholic Church interpreted it in Italy, forever appealing to eye and ear amid that wizardry of loveliness that bewitches fog-bound Northern Europeans when they travel in the south of their continent?

Emil Frederiksen, one of Jörgensen's best-informed commentators (*Credo*, November, 1936), notes that for a considerable time, during his self-reproaching period between 1894 and 1906, it was very difficult for Jörgensen to reconcile poetry and religion. "He conceived Christianity or at least *his* Christianity as anti-poetry. Later on, particularly in his Italian period after 1913, he came to the sound view that poetry is a powerful agent of the truth." But he was forever hounded by the conflict between hedonism and religion, by the idea that poetry and religion have really nothing to do with one another—although the very first inkling he ever had of Catholicism in his youth was reading the Latin hymns *Dies Irae* and *Urbs Caelestis*.

But even when beauty and supernatural piety are reconciled, what place is left for the third element in human ideals, ordinary moral virtue or ethics?

Brandes had denounced ethics as a pure phantom and charged Kierkegaard with insincerity in trying to establish an ethical middle-ground between hedonism and asceticism, contrary to Kierkegaard's real views. Jörgensen turned away in disgust from the arid wastes of nineteenth-century purely humanitarian ethics, from mere Kantian morality. How easy to follow Baudelaire or Verlaine, and seek escape from the flesh by soaring into the eternal, leaving once and for all the ordinary round of homely natural virtues: honesty, industry, domestic fidelity, good citizenship, and all the rest of them! If he switched from the Russian Nihilists to their congener, Dostoyevsky, how easy it was to attain to that Oriental "humility," which gives up all worry about sin, all trouble about conscience or vice or morals, because it trusts in the infinite mercy of God who will forever pardon the worst sinner but despises the self-satisfied legalist! Better to sin humbly, in such a notion, than to be proudly virtuous. A wonderful conception, that contains certain truths; but it also harbors a deadly error that historically has led straight to Bolshevism.

Yet in some mysterious way Johannes Jörgensen passed through and beyond the dangers and succeeded in uniting into one stupendous sum of a life's achievement in his *person* and in his *writings* the pure intellectual vision of supernatural truth, the practice of a sublime yet simple and practical moral ideal, and the pursuit and capture of beauty under all her forms.

That Jörgensen was able to achieve this union is due, as I see it, to three very elementary things. He had a clear mind, he was a true artist, and he was humble.

That his mind was clear is shown by the extreme simplicity of the two reasons that led to his conversion. "When I became a Catholic," says Jörgensen in a short article entitled *My Life's View*, "it was

for two reasons: first the Roman Church has existed from the beginning . . . second, it has always been persecuted." And by the fact of persecution the Church was shown not to be a mere teaching organization but the true Mystical Body of Christ.

Jörgensen wondered how the hatred of the free-thinker for the Church could possibly be reconciled with reason. "Does the freethinker really believe that he is wiser and cleverer than we are?" he asked. "If that is the case, why should he not smile at us, patronize us, shrug his shoulders over us. But why should he *hate* us?"

No single truth impressed him more deeply than the fact that this singular liability of the Church and its members to persecution in all periods of the world's history springs fundamentally from its identification with Jesus Christ. The Church, he said, is Christ ever present in the world. "Its actions are Christ's actions; its words are Christ's words; its obedience is Christ's obedience." The world's hatred for the Church is simply an expression of its hatred for the Saviour: an idea which meets us at every turn in Holy Writ. Said the Saviour: "If the world hate you, know ye, that it hath hated me before you. . . . If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you."

The true artist is the type of person who instinctively and necessarily turns beauty, wherever and whenever he experiences it, into some form of expression. In the evening of his life Johannes Jörgensen, the artist, the moralist, the biographer, the guide of pilgrims, and the religious man has to his credit twelve volumes of poems, thirteen novels and collections of stories, forty volumes of biographies, travel studies, criticisms, and miscellaneous works; and an autobiography in seven volumes. A great number of his works, about half, are out of print. There were fifty-five translations into foreign languages of his works in 1924; probably greatly in excess of that number today. Not to speak of a host of his own translations from other languages into Danish: Papini, R. H. Benson; hymns, prayers, etc.

And as a humble man he has never satisfactorily explained to himself why God chose him. "A Stuckenbergs, a Claussen, could be allowed to live and die as free-thinkers; I could not! For some reason or other unknown to me the Almighty had reckoned in His economy with such an insignificant person as J. J. from Svendborg . . ." And as a humble man and true artist he has done what he did by incessant, painstaking hard work.

Anyhow, God did choose him. One of his little stories tells of the foolish spider whose magnificent web fell to the ground because the spider, in his impatience, had snapped the single thread that suspended the web from the tree far above. I believe that the future, while it will winnow out permanent values from the mass of the purely ephemeral in Jörgensen's productions, will show that his union of sane thought, right conduct, beauty, and emotion all tending Heavenward was providential in a time when the whole complicated web of man's proud culture had fallen to the ground because it had lost the solitary thread that attached it to its Creator.

BOOKS

A MAN CALLED PASCAL

PASCAL: THE LIFE OF GENIUS. By Morris Bishop. Reynal and Hitchcock. \$3.50

IN January, 1656, Antoine, the Great Arnauld, Doctor of the Sorbonne, related to half Port Royal, its brains and pillar, was hiding in their sanctuary fourteen miles southwest of Paris. His loved cause of Jansenism seemed doomed in the Sorbonne, at court, in Rome. In his suspense and fear for the future, a friend whispered in his ear: "After all no one understands this dispute about the *Augustinus*. Appeal the case in popular language to the larger tribunal of public opinion." The advice seemed sensible and met with general approval. Arnauld, the maker of syllogisms, a perpetual-motion theological machine gun, as Henri Bremond calls him, started the work and drew up a summary of his case for the Sorbonne. He summoned a meeting of the Jansenist faithful assembled at Port Royal and read aloud his defense. The silence that greeted its conclusion was not lost on Arnauld who read the judgment in the faces of his audience. Turning to Blaise Pascal who was among them, the lawyer-hermit said: "You who are young, you ought to be able to do something."

It was a veritable inspiration, not only to the other hearers but to Pascal himself. A prodigy, precocious like his sister Jacqueline, versatile, handicapped by a weak body, the flaming spark had impelled the weak body to much labor, a creator of conic sections at sixteen, bringing to physics the foundation of hydrodynamics. A philosopher of parts in the tradition of Descartes whose philosophy inspired his apologetic, without, however, winning his ardent support, on its own merits. Here was a new field wherein he could raise his rapier on a more extensive plane. His admirers did not need to be reminded of his literary ability, his power of incisive language and the ability of summarizing difficult ideas in arresting formulas. His gifts would moreover be put to service for the cause of his own dear Port-Royal; his pen and genius would strike at his Jesuit enemies in defense of the "pure" of Port-Royal before the court of public opinion. It was a pamphleteer that was needed, not another heavy theologian marshaling the intricacies of metaphysics and theology, with ponderous learning and interminable quotations from Augustus.

Pascal now brought all that marvellous energy of soul which even a weakened frame could not restrain, to the assigned task and soon produced his first *Lettre Provinciale*, Letter to a Provincial. He read it aloud to the reassembled coterie at Port-Royal-de-Champs. "This is excellent," cried Arnauld, "people will like it. It must be printed." Thus was born the famous *Lettres Provinciales*.

"No one realized that the writing of the *Lettres Provinciales* was one of the important dates in French social, spiritual and literary history," says Morris Bishop in this volume. The Cornell Professor had already earlier in the book treated of the early scientific work of Pascal, his conversion, with a faithful picture of Saint-Cyran, of Pascal, man of the world, mystic, penitent. He has done all this with balanced judgment, a due respect for proportion in sampling the work of authorities such as Léon Brunschwig, Pierre Bourroux, Chevalier and Strowski. With the help of these and other writers he has not feared to enter the more theological aspects of the Jansenist disputes, and though his summation of the teaching of St. Augustine is not adequate and is liable to misunderstanding, and though both Jansenists and Jesuits might justly complain on some few minor scores, even here one must feel indebted to Professor Morris for

his indefatigable labor to present an unbiased picture of man, scene and times. Considering the *provence* it is rather startling to find so judicious, unbiased, comprehensive a study of the child of genius that Pascal remained during life. There is only one incident of Pascal's life, his supposed love affair with Charlotte Gouffier, wherein the author follows the supposition of Victor Cousin, that seems to be interpreted beyond the reach and weight of the facts adduced. This and some few deductions of lesser account are the only specks on the canvas of a book which is never dull, always entertaining and characterized by the same admirable literary qualities that made the writer of the *Provinciales* and the *Pensées* one of the creators of modern classic French prose.

The assumption of the pseudonym of Louis de Montalte helped the writer of the Provincial Letters and one is made a little sensitive to the advantage Morris Bishop has as the *étranger* as he looks from outside on the sometimes petty, often acrimonious and rarely edifying scenes within the household of faith. Such little pleasanties are rare enough in a book that will prove a delight to all students of the very complex machine that is the human heart. He has perhaps crowded into one short sentence the real Pascal when, after quoting Pascal's own words: "Ordinarily one regards St. Athanasius, St. Theresa and the others as crowned with glory and without passions like us . . . But that great Saint was a man called Athanasius, and Saint Theresa, a girl," Mr. Bishop adds, "And this Saint Pascal that some would elevate before us was a man called Pascal." What kind of a man, is the book's theme.

WILLIAM J. BENN

SOLACE IN DARKNESS

THE ROAD TO PEACE. James J. Daly, S.J. Bruce Publishing Co. \$2

AT a time when the world is torn by wars and rumors of wars, when many discordant voices are each loudly proclaiming that their way is the one and only path to world peace, Father Daly's book of essays, *The Road to Peace*, comes as a welcome messenger truly bringing "sweetness and light"—those two words which the author has rescued from the false sentimentality that has enveloped them. Despite the title, however, this book is not expounding a new remedy against war, but is concerned with helping the individual soul on its way through this world to God, and peace. Incidentally, in following the road outlined, the vexing problems of this muddled world will find their solution, for, as the author writes in the essay *The Kingdom of Christ*: "Christ was sensitively alive to the framework of human society in which we must work out our eternal salvation. But He gave us a simple rule for meeting every exigency in the vicissitudes and complexities of a constantly changing world. 'Seek ye first,' He says, 'the Kingdom of God . . . and all these things will be added unto you.' He does not take the trouble of telling us what 'all these things' are. It was quite unnecessary; they will follow if our first concern is with His Kingdom."

This book lends itself admirably to meditation. Each essay is complete in itself and yet in their entirety they form a consistent whole. Father Daly has the faculty of presenting the essentials of the Christian faith in such a fashion that they startle the reader and force him to re-examine his life and to see wherein he has

fallen below the standard expected of all followers of Christ.

In the essay on *Prayer*, Father Daly has made a peculiarly happy comparison between learning a foreign language and the language of prayer. In a few pages he has presented an approach to prayer that is clear, logical, and concise. It should be of especial help to those who have been so bewildered by books on the subject that they fear they will never be able to pray "properly." Father Daly shows that the simple rules employed in acquiring a new language are equally successful in that most important, and often neglected, language—prayer.

Especially refreshing is the chapter, *Love's Fear*, for it brushes aside many of the cobwebs that clutter the modern mind. "The unreligious world says it loves God but does not fear Him." In fact fear is so much out of fashion now with all the vague talk of "the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man" that one is sometimes in danger of forgetting that fear of the Lord is one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Father Daly pierces below the surface of all this sentimental twaddle and his sane exposition will re-assure those who feel that their worship of God is imperfect because they also fear Him.

There is a joy and serenity about this little book which entitle it to a place among the bedside favorites for constant reference by all who are in need of help in journeying successfully on the road to peace. The grace and charm of the author's style enhance the value of his spiritual message. KEITH MARY ADAMS

FROM BRIGHTON TO PESSIMISM

REGENCY. By D. L. Murray. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. \$3
SAGAS of family life are with us to stay, and this is perhaps one of the best written and most pretentious: the subtitle, *a quadruple portrait* indicates its theme. As a matter of fact it presents the portraits of four women in whom various inherited characteristics and emotions seethe and often overflow. Miss Regency Davenport, named after the period in which she flourished, is the ancestress of the other three; and so vividly and bravely, albeit wickedly, did she live that her influence seems to brood over her descendants like a dark shadow. Moreover, it might be added, the portraits are good in order of time—the modern being too hysterical to ring true though it adds unity of plan.

The background for the whole novel, it is really four novels in one, is the Brighton of a changing century and a half. Brighton has been the subject of many recent books, and Mr. Murray's does not compare unfavorably with them. His knowledge of its odd corners, its history and manners seems exceedingly thorough, and he has cleverly caught the various popular idioms of which he uses just enough to give color without causing tedium.

Color is the word, in fact, that best describes this novel, resembling as it does a carefully woven tapestry, each portion planned in relation to the rest and viewed objectively. Which does not mean that the characters do not live, for they do, though remaining constantly remote as is fitting in tapestry figures. But it is difficult to take even their love affairs very seriously, or their sins, which they commit much too casually. The binding of black and red may perhaps be symbolical, black for those same sins and red for the young blood pulsing eagerly only to be spilled at last in hopeless self-destruction. "What a waste!" exclaims one character over Carol's beautiful dead young body (Carol was Regency's great-great-grand-daughter); and, though another character shortly afterward dramatically pronounces that you can't defeat life, the book is brought to an end on a pessimistic note.

PAULA KURTH

BOOKS IN BRIEFER REVIEW

THINK AND PRAY. By Joseph McSorley, C.S.P. Longmans, Green and Co. \$1.50

IF you are inclined to be anti-clerical, read this little book and see what a good priest can do for his people in helping them to pray. Father McSorley shares all his own best thoughts with us, on Our Lord, the Holy Ghost, the Mass, the Blessed Sacrament, Our Lady, on really almost everything in the spiritual life. These are little meditations made out loud and dealt in sentences of varying line-lengths, somewhat as one breathes. There is no striving after poetic phrase; it is all sincerity and simplicity, and whenever an especially charming phrase occurs—and there are many of these—it is clearly marked with spontaneity. Father McSorley makes no effort at presiding over our thoughts with any original conceits of his own; he simply generously opens to us his own heart at prayer, in such straightforward fashion and on such a variety of subjects that he sort of shames us into realizing that prayer is not difficult, that the unaffected way is the best way, and that there are really so many lovely things to think about when we put ourselves in the presence of God, and so many happy, holy things to say. This makes a delightful book to read out loud in retreats or in private devotions.

NEW FAITH FOR OLD. By Shailler Mathews. The Macmillan Co. \$3

ANY book emanating from the University of Chicago is bound to be different. This latest effort of Dr. Shailler Mathews, Dean Emeritus of its Divinity School, is no exception. Originally planned as a history of the evolution, or better still, the devolution of Protestantism in the United States, the author has succumbed to that temptation of old age and written an autobiography.

Dr. Mathews is but another type of the wreckage of the Protestant faith degenerating from Christianity into a "reliance upon love as an expression of that cosmic activity we know as God." One may aptly apply his own well-turned phrase to the author, "and in many cases religious change which should be a divine comedy becomes a human tragedy." Political incidents, academic freedom at the University of Chicago, the Fundamentalist-Modernist quarrel, etc., make interesting reading. Grafting social doctrines upon the ideals of Jesus is the author's alleged contribution to religion. With amusing tolerance he admits that American Catholicism has also modernized itself to meet social changes, and instances "the parochial schools, the Knights of Columbus, Daughters of Isabella, Peace Societies and Social Studies." All the social doctrines of Catholicism from the Mount of the Beatitudes to *Quadragesimo Anno* of Pius XI seems unknown to him. *New Faith For Old* is the story of a man and a religion which has exchanged Christianity for a mellow yet muddled sociology.

THE WHITE HARE. By Francis Stuart. The Macmillan Co. \$2.50

HARD to understand in simple Ireland are the people in this novel. There are, mainly, three of them, all in love with one another. There is Patrick, who marries Hylla; Dominic, his brother, ten years junior, who has Hylla for some sort of a mystic bride, and just knows he has, too, even when, sinking in the Atlantic on a foundering ship, all is lost. There are many flashes of poetry in Mr. Stuart's prose, both the poetry of language and of idea and emotion; but as for the last, if ever pathetic fallacy spoiled all, here in *The White Hare* all is spoiled. Nothing rings true enough. Courage and some virtue emerge from characters who have no right, consistently, to appear as the source thereof. If the story is meant to be symbolic, the lesson is lost in the sheer oddity of the symbols. The jacket names the heroes "de Burgh," but the text "de Lacey": whatever their names they are a queer lot in any language.

THEATRE

THE best acting on the New York stage this season thus far was that of Alla Nazimova in Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, at the Longacre Theatre. Last year the superb Russian gave us a series of history-making performances in *Ghosts*. This year she chose to get inside the skin of Ibsen's most abhorrent creation, and to show her to us with a cumulative power and a cumulative horror that made the spine creep. Never before can there have been from start to finish of the performance a more perfect interpretation of the Hedda Ibsen presented to us in his text.

For some reason hard to understand every other brilliant actress who has tried to show us Hedda has failed to see and reveal some one facet of her many-sided character. They all saw her cruelty, but many of them missed her odd sense of humor. They understood her feeling of intolerable boredom, which stands out from beginning to end of the drama, but many of them failed to realize her abysmal fear of life. They saw her monstrous selfishness, for this was something no one could miss, but many of them failed to see and show us her uncanny sexlessness. They saw her passion for evil, but they failed to show us her passion for power. Emily Stevens had some big moments in her acting of the role. So did Mrs. Fiske, and even Clare Eames—with whose impersonation as a whole I had less admiration than most of my contemporaries.

Alla Nazimova is Hedda when she acts the role. She is so overwhelmingly and convincingly Hedda that one almost expects the shot which destroys Hedda to destroy her impersonator. Men and women in the audience had a dazed look as they left the theatre after Nazimova's opening performance, with Judge Brack's frantic cry: "People don't do such things," still raging in their ears. No other living actress shows us the peaks and depths of art Madame Nazimova reveals in these ageless Ibsen plays. It takes some mental adjustment to go out into Broadway and back into everyday life after spending an evening with her.

There has been considerable criticism of her company. I thought it rather good. She gave the roles of Hedda's husband and his friend Lovborg to younger men than those usually entrusted with the roles—but Ibsen gives us no intimation that these men were other than young. Also, I liked McKay Morris's interpretation of Judge Brack, though I have always objected to Morris' mouthy diction. He gave us something rather new, a smooth and smiling hunter of women, ruthless and implacable under his invariable geniality. But there are only "bits" for others in any Ibsen play when Alla Nazimova is on the stage.

Johnny Johnson, written by Paul Green and produced by the Group Theatre at the Forty-fourth Street Theatre, is at once very unusual, very uneven, and very interesting. Whether it succeeds or not it will be referred to by critics and remembered by playgoers for a long time to come. Its central idea is arresting. Johnny Johnson, a young man so violently opposed to war that he almost gives up the girl he loves because she tries to force him into war, is finally persuaded that the World War is being fought to end war. This object seems to Johnny well worth fighting for. He immediately volunteers and is swung into service. We see him in the recruiting office, at the camp drill-ground, in the front-line trenches. He has trouble in all these places. He is not the stuff of which fighters are made. But he is no coward. He proves that by volunteering to go out alone on No-Man's Land to capture an enemy sniper who has been picking off his comrades. He captures the sniper and finds that the enemy is only a boy of sixteen, terrified by his job, but obeying orders. Johnny releases him and sends him to his German lines with good-will messages.

So far, excellent. Then, suddenly, the play temporarily goes to pieces. There is a scene too idiotic to dwell on, in which all the officers of the high command are shown in session and burlesqued with incredible stupidity. Up till then the play had been logical, satirical, and absorbing. After degenerating into boring burlesque, it picks itself up again and gives us a really admirable scene in the trenches, with two of the best war songs written since the war. The war goes on. The play goes on, and improves. A great battle takes place—and it really seems like a battle. There is a deeply impressive tableau in No-Man's-Land. Then Johnny is sent home and confined in an asylum because of his views. Abruptly the play again degenerates into farce. There is a burlesque of a psychiatrist in his office—not funny. There is a debate among the other patients. Certainly not funny. Then a final pickup in the play. After ten years we are shown Johnny in a simple and haunting farewell scene. Discharged from the asylum at last, he wanders the streets, trying to earn a living selling toys while he sings a song that will haunt the spectator for days. With the exception of these three songs the music by Kurt Weill is negligible.

The trouble with *Johnny Johnson* is that Paul Green apparently could not make up his mind whether to make his play a drama, a comedy, a farce, or a burlesque. He tried to make it all four—and the thing simply cannot be done. A comment made by a well-known producer sitting just behind me put his final impression in a nutshell. He said: "This play ought to be taken in hand by an expert and whipped into shape." To which he should have added: "It's well worth it."

Black Limelight, a play written by Gordon Sherry, and produced at the Mansfield by George Bushar and John Tuerk, is one of those melodramas that go into action in the last act and give us a scene that makes one's hair stand on end. In this instance it has to be a black scene because the murderer—of course there is a murderer—sees well only in the dark. This eye condition, a medical one, is also supposed to involve a murder urge. In the daytime this special murderer gets along fairly well with glasses; but by night he roams the countryside as a killer, committing his numerous murders in pitch blackness. The heroine of the play, chosen by him as his next victim, discovers his secret, pits her wits against his in their big scene at the climax, and saves her life by her superior cleverness. There are two acts of unexciting preparation before this big scene comes on, just as there were in *Love From A Stranger*. New York theatregoers would not tolerate the long wait in *Love From A Stranger*, and they may not tolerate it in *Black Limelight*.

I have given up guessing about a community that turns down a really capital melodrama, acted to perfection, as it has recently done in the case of *Night Must Fall*. There was a real melodrama. I do not know yet, and now I never shall know, why the murderer in it carried the lady's head around in a hat box. In a quieter play it would have helped a lot by giving us something to think about when there was no action on the stage. As there was action all the time in *Night Must Fall*, we really did not need it. Mr. Emlyn Williams, the author-star, should have sent the hat-box to *Black Limelight* to brighten up the early scenes. As it is, we are really killing off our melodramas so fast that we shall have none left in a week or two. Perhaps that will be a lesson to us.

One thing I must add about *Black Limelight*. It offers us, without any question, the very worst diction used by any company thus far on our stage this season. And yet producers wonder why so many plays have been failing!

ELIZABETH JORDAN

FILMS

GOLD DIGGERS OF 1937. Someone connected with the business of producing screen musicals has shown a great deal of unwonted imagination in veering the plot of this opus ever so slightly from the tiresome formula of backstage fantasy. True, many of the hackneyed situations remain, preeminently that last minute financial threat to the big show, but most of the comedy is drawn from a source other than the theatre. Life insurance comes into its own as a laughing matter when two bankrupt producers take out a million dollar policy on the backer of their show. With the help of a couple of flinty ladies they do their best to collect on it but they are prevented from making the "angel" a fact rather than a figure of speech by the alertness of an insurance agent. There is something vaguely superfluous about an insurance agent's also being a crooner but that is the role assigned to Dick Powell. Joan Blondell, who is on the side of the angels this once, wins the questionable honor of sharing with him the extravagant musical sequences, and Victor Moore carries the burden of comedy almost without aid. The saturnine Osgood Perkins and Charles D. Brown are as good as their words and Glenda Farrell and Rosalind Marquis complete the cast. There is, as usual, nothing particularly elevating in either lines or action but the film is unobjectionable for adults. This variation will probably be as popular as its predecessors, leading us to believe that intelligence is rated low. (Warner)

RAINBOW ON THE RIVER. All signs point to the fact that the release of this picture during the holidays is not pure coincidence. Not that the theme is especially pertinent to Christmas, but its appeal is so light and so general that it will provide a happy excuse to rid the home of the blare of horns and the clangor of electric trains. Set in New Orleans after the close of the Civil War, it presents young Bobby Breen as an orphan in the care of a colored mammy. When separation threatens this flower-selling family, the boy's grandmother up North is located by the parish priest and she is persuaded to take him into her hostile household. The task of winning the crustaceous old woman's affections is finally accomplished with the aid of a sympathetic butler. This film is admirably suited to young audiences who will not mind the occasionally overpowering odor of sweetness and light which attaches to it, and the effective singing of the star coupled with some agreeable comedy executed by Charles Butterworth ought to compensate the superior grown-ups. May Robson and Alan Dinehart are also among those present and there is the inevitable chorus of Negro voices for a musical backdrop. (RKO)

FUGITIVE IN THE SKY. There is possibly a sign of the times in the manner in which this picture, which involves murder in a modern transcontinental airplane, combines the new science and old habit. When the ship takes off, it carries, among others, a notorious gunman, a reporter, a detective and a pretty hostess into the midst of a neat murder. Suspects get under foot at every turn and there is considerably more fog inside the plane than out until suspicion settles upon the killer of established reputation. He promptly assumes control but when they are forced down in a dust storm and take refuge in a farmhouse, the real culprit is discovered to be an old woman interested in astrology. She is, in turn, discovered to be a very young woman in disguise who is far more interested in stolen bonds than in horoscopes. Surprises no end, you see. But in spite of its obvious thrills, there is a modest amount of suspenseful interest in the unfolding of the story. Add a dash of comedy and some exciting scuffles and you have a fair piece of entertainment whose appeal will be strongest among the unsophisticated. (Warner)

THOMAS J. FITZMORRIS

EVENTS

UNUSUAL sights were afforded a privileged few. . . . From her kitchen window a Long Island lady had a superb view of a goat eating her husband's pink shirt which flapped gently on the clothesline. Her view of the goat munching on a blue shirt was also good. . . . A State trooper called to remove the goat had his first sight of goat's teeth sinking into a police-car spare tire. . . . Another woman, knitting in her parlor, became aware of an automobile coming through the house wall, parking by her chair. The driver seemed dazed. Police arrived, whiffed, said the daze was caused by liquor. . . . Inhabitants of Melbourne, Australia, saw ninety-eight leading citizens banqueting in a lion's cage. A lion and his wife sat at the foot of the table. . . . Accidents marred the week. . . . An Eastern man scratched his ear with the wrong end of a loaded pistol which went off. . . . Spanish soldiers captured a hospital, made a feast on laboratory guinea pigs and rabbits, swallowed stewed cholera, leprosy and typhoid germs. . . . Science dived into the unknown, came up with startling discoveries. . . . The old belief that elephants digest 58% of their hay was exploded. They digest only 44%. A half-ton of bicarbonate of soda before and after meals keeps an elephant feeling chipper. . . . A new approach to the farm problem appeared promising. Chemical farming experts announced that carrots, onions, cabbages and other delicacies may now be grown in kitchen sinks. . . . People off Bermuda saw a diver, in rubber suit and helmet, being let down into the Atlantic Ocean. The diver groped along the ocean floor, picked up a set of false teeth, was pulled up. A naval officer had mislaid his store teeth. . . .

A religious shake-up was announced in Ireland. An Irish Rabbi, Isaac Herzog, of Dublin, became Chief Rabbi of Palestine, the first Irishman to be thus honored. . . . Great authors are often small authors. Margaret Mitchell is very fragile, does not weigh much more than her book, *Gone With the Wind*. . . . One of the things that worries American college coaches very little is the fear that Aristotle and Saint Thomas Aquinas will lure their athletes away from them. One coach, however, experienced just that headache. The University of Chicago track captain and record holder, abdicated from his athletic throne, plunged into the California woods for a three-year bout with Thomistic philosophy. . . . Little Dips from Life: Forty-eight years ago a tiny girl knelt by a death-bed, promised her dying mother she would find a wayward brother. She kept her promise, found him last week in Chicago. . . . A young woman blind since childhood; her world blackness, sounds, nothing else. Her eyesight begins returning. Color leaps up before her. She sees her father, her mother. . . . The world is filled with people who are spiritually blind. The joy that comes with spiritual eyesight is very great. People to whom the universe and life were blackness, meaningless sounds, suddenly perceive radiant color and harmony streaming through creation. They see their Father, their Mother. . . .

An exhibition of anti-God literature was held in Rome. The gigantic, worldwide scale on which atheistic literature is being disseminated appalled visitors. . . . There are centers in every nation, a larger center on every continent. The world campaign is directed from Russia. . . . Montevideo is the center from which the atheistic Communist literature is scattered over South America. . . . The exhibit section devoted to Spain showed how the Moscow agents brought about the present bloody carnage there. The work was financed by Russia. . . . Blasphemous caricatures of Christ and His Mother are being spread around the world, more so than at any time since the Crucifixion. It might be a good idea for Catholics to do something about this.

THE PARADER